

To the right Honorable, and his Highnes Chap-
lain, Lord, Fraunceys Bacon, Esq.,
Lord gouernour of Barwicke, and
one of the Quenes Maiesties most
Honorable priuate Counsell, &c.
Arthur Goldyng wisheth encrease
of Honour, and haboundaunce of
the knowledge & grace of Chyſſte,
with perfect continuance therein,
to the ende.



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It is agre-
ed on & con-
fessed by all
men (righte
Honorable)
that reason
& vnderſtan-
dyng, ma-
keth differ-
ence betwene

man kinde and other liuyng Creatures,
but how a true Chyſtian maye be knowe
and diſcerned from an infibell and coun-
terfet, none perceiueth, ſaue onely ſuche

THE EPISTLE.

as geue diligent hede to the written
word, wherein ye may finde that

nerlastyng to know one God
and

that he hath sent, that
they are blessed whiche heare the worde
of God and keepe it, that not enery one
that saith Lorde Lorde shall enter into
the kingdome of Heaue, but he that doth
the will of the heavenly Father. Where-
by it is euident, that wicked Iudell-
es are either altogether boide of the
ledge of God, or els farre from
walke accordyngly, if they haue
to any vnderstandyng thereof.

the true Christian, not onely laboureth
beholde the grace of God, which bringeth
saluation to all men, but also learneth to
renounce impietie and worldly lustes,
and to liue soberly, iustly, and godly, in
this present worlde, and lookinge for that
blessed hope, and appearinge of the glory
of the great God and our Saviour Iesus
Christe, walketh all the dayes of his life,
in holines and rightuousnes, not after
mens deuise & phantasie, but accordyng
to the rules and ordinaunces, which God
hath prescribed. And yet beside & heights
of

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of Sathan, the frailties of the flesh, and the wickednesse of the worlde, we maye easily see how the mallice of men stayeth and hindereth the children of God, from proceedinge in that they haue professed, while some are driuen to stagger at the prosperitie of wicked: when they see them neyther troubled nor plagued as other men are: eyther to feare their powre whē they see the Kinges of the Earth bande themselues, and the Princes confederate together against the Lorde, and his anointed, and euery good man with griefe of harte, enforced to complaine with Dauid: how longe wil ye imagine mischief, ye shalbe all slaine, ye shalbe as a bowed bow, or as a wall shaken. They consulte to cast him downe from his dignitie, their delighte is in lye, they blesse with theyr mouthes, and curse with their hartes. It is not driue to men what hath bene concluded in the Councell of Trent, what confederacie and conspiracie, the Romayne Antichrist hath made, with other great Princes, against the doctrine of God, and such as professe it, what force & tyrannie hath bene vsed to suppress the children of

* If

God:

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God: what pollicies, and practises bothe at home, and abroade, haue bene, and are dayly put in executiō, to hinder the course of the Gospell: what lies and flanders are dayly raysed, what quarrels are inuēted, what falsehood and dissimulation is in euery place practised, to keepe the most parte of men frō the knowledge of truth, whereby as we see the wordes of Dauid verified in the wicked deaiyng of this miserable age, so haue we iust cause to com-
 plaine with him, and not onely to pro-
 clayme with confidence the like ende to
 mischieuous men, but also to arme our
 selues against al assaultes that are made,
 to driue or drawe vs from the truth pro-
 fessed. Peca it behoueth vs herein to care
 for other, not for our selues onely, least
 by vs any be discouraged, where they
 ought to be comforted, or hindred, where
 they ought to be fordered. For the ven-
 geaunce is fearefull whiche our Saviour
 pronounceth, where he saith: wo to him
 by whome Offence cometh, & the charge
 is not smal which he giueth to his, where
 he willet: that their light so shine before
 me, that their good woorkes may be seene

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to the glory of their Father whiche is in Heauen, whereof it followeth that God would not haue vs by any meanes to discourage, but rather to encourage, neither to disswade, but rather by all meanes to perswade, and allure all sortes of men as much as in vs lieth, to the loue and liking of Gods eternall truth. This point of duetie God requireth by his Prophete Esay, aswell of Princes as of Pastors, when in the kingdome of Christe he bid- deth them goe thzough, goe thzough the gates prepare you the way for the people, cast, bp cast vp, the waye & gather out the stones, set vp a standarte for the people. So God woulde haue all impedimentes remoued, so he would that men should be prouoked to the kingedome of Christe. Whereunto this treatise wzitten by that excellent instrument of God, maister John Caluine, very much anayleth, for in it he purposely entreateth, of such Offences & stumblinge blockes, as at this daye make many men either to feare, or to abhorre the doctrine of the Gospell, it serueth wel for this our countrie in this light of truth offered, to conuince the obstinate, to con-

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firme the weeke, to stay the waneryng, to
 instruct the ignorant, and to occasion all
 men with reuerence to receiue the glad
 tidings of the Gospell, and that without
 delay, least for our vnthankfulnesse the
 publique profession thereof beyng taken
 awaye, it be to late for vs to seeke oyle,
 when we should be readie to enter with
 the Bridegrome. Wherefoze I could not
 deuise how my endeouour might better be
 employed, then in the translation of suche
 a treatise, as remouyng al lettes, maketh
 freight vnto vs the waye of Saluation.
 And because your Lordshippes good go-
 uernment, & conuersation in these North
 partes of Englande, hath furdered not a
 litle, to the light of true Religion, I
 thought it most conuenient to be dedica-
 ted and presented vnto your Honour, as
 vnto one whom to this day, neither pros-
 peritie, nor aduersitie, coulde make asha-
 med of Christe crucified: not for that I
 thinke the matter cōteyned in this Booke
 needeth the defence of any man, for it
 rather defendeth then craueth defence:
 but because I truste that other shall be
 more willinge to receiue it, and vse it to
their

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their comforte & comoditie, when they see it after a sorte conueyed and commended vnto them, as it were from your Lordships handes. And although my trauaile herein may seeme very smal, yet my hope is that your Honour of your accustomed goodnesse will accept it, as the testimonie of a duetifull minde, as God hath genen you a singuler desire to aduance his glorie, and benefite his Church, so I truste ye shall haue no small occasion hereby, to continue & procede therein. Notwithstandinge the manifold impedimentes of these perillous times, when Satan by all meanes seeketh in stayinge the sincere preachinge of Gods most holy worde, to scatter the people into sectes & schismes, and by raylinge of dissention in opinions to slander and defame the doctrine of truth, against whose subtiltie it behoneth all such as God hath aduanced to authoritie, to labour especiallye the publique preachinge of Gods eternall truth, be furthered & mainteyned amonge the people: for the holy Ghost teacheth, that where preachinge faileth the people goe to hauoche, and experience sheweth that

one

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one of these two mischiefs ensueth whē
 preachynge is stayed (to wete) either no
 Religion at all, wherof procedeth Athes-
 isme and Epicuresme, oz els every man to
 haue a Religion by him selfe, which is the
 very Originall cause of all Heresie and
 Scisme in the Church of Christ. It is the
 Deuilles policie to haue preachinge set a-
 part, to the ende, that he may haue a time
 to scatter his darnell & cockle in y^e Lordes
 felde, wherein if he be not speedely pre-
 uented, it is to be feared, that the Deuill
 which hath bene cast out, will returne a-
 gaine to his old possession, and findinge it
 vacante & readie trimmed for him, settle
 him selfe, and seuen other Deuilles with
 him worse then he is, & so it fall out with
 vs, as with the froward generatiō, whose
 ende was worse then the beginnyng.
 Which extreme miserie the Lord vouch-
 safe to preuent with his mercie, that we &
 our posteritie may cōtinue in y^e light of
 his truth, & that the same may continue
 with vs to the ende. At Warwicke the
 firste of October. Anno 1566.

Your good Lordshippes, most humble to
 commaunde, Arthur Goldinge.

To Laurence Nor-
mandie a man endewed with
excellent gyftes, Iohn Calvin
sendeth grætinge,



Hereas for many
considerations, I had
bowed some parte of
my trauels vnto you
in my hart, I haue de-
med this little worke
worthie to be chosen
before others, bicause your example may
auaile, and that not smally, to bringe in
credits the doctrine whiche it conteineth.
For since the time, that forsakynge your
countrie willingly, you haue come hither
as a banished man, we twno can best beare
witnesse with how many and how violēt
practises of Sathā you haue bene assaul-
ted: & yet there are other also that knowe
of it. The fourth moneth after your de-
partinge, came tidinges of your Fathers
death. It could not be but that you muste
nedes thinke that, which malicious per-
sones letteth not to speake, how the cause
of

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of his death might be ascribed to thought, to the entent that all the blame might be laide vppon your necke. Anon after. followed a moste sharpe wounde, that your wife beyng suche a woman as euery good man would wishe him selfe the like, was take away in the chiefe flowre of her age. Here also it coulde not otherwise be, but that diuers tēptatiōs perced your minde, beyng not a man of a blockishe nature. Now sounded in your eares the flanders of euill men, that she was drawen out of her natue soyle in an vnluckie hower, to leaue her wretched life, almoste in an other worlde. But this touched you nerer at the hart: that they should haue any colour, bicause they reported that your purpose was cursed of the Lorde with a sorrowfull issue. I omit the other innumerable prickinges which you could not but feele inwardly. For sepyng widowhōde is a grieuous euill, it was to excedinge a griefe to you, to be depriued of suche a companion of your life. And to encrease the heape of your sorrowes, laste of all came also the buriall of your little daughter. In the meane while the Denill pored out

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out of other places, all the mischief he
could deuise, to the entet that ouerwhel-
minge your wounded hart, he might dis-
patch you out of hāde. Finally you were
driue to swallow by moze trouble with-
in one halfe yere, than many that are cō-
mended for the haultnesse of their coura-
ges haue suffered all their liues longe.
That was a heape of stumblingsblockes
cast against you by the sutteltie of Sathā
euen at your firste settinge forth in your
race, to haue compelled you to pull backe
your foote againe. But you puttyng your
affiance in the inuincible power of Gods
spirite, gaue ensample to all others, that
there is no let so deepe & difficulte, which
by the same apde may not be waded out
of. And therewithal you haue tried, with
what armour the Lorde is wonte to fur-
nische his seruantes, as often as he calleth
them to the encounter. I remember whē
I first tolde you your Father was dead,
and that I alledged the erample of Abra-
ham, whome the men of his age mighte
call the murtherer of his Father, in that
Thare followinge him when he went fro
home, miscaried by the waye: you made
me

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me answere by and by, that for asmuche
as God did bothe beare witnesse to yone
doynge, and also allowed it, you passed no-
thinge for the slaunders of the wicked:
and that nothinge grieued you, but that
your Father bearynge you companie in
your iourney had not made you like vnto
Abraham. For you were neither so nice
nor so proude, that you would eyther re-
fuse to be Abrahams companion, or that
you would shunne that slander, whiche
God setteth out with great commenda-
tion. Howbeit your wife did of her selfe
wonderfully allwage and mitigate the
sorrowe of her death, before she departed
from vs. For there coulde no apter medi-
cine haue bene wisshed, than those herol-
call wordes of hers, whiche she vttered
vpon her death bedde: when takinge me
by the hande she thanked God, who had
brought her on his hãde into such a place.
where she might die with a quiet cõscience:
when, bewailynge in her harte the state of
her former life, she cried out that she was
double happie, in that beyng late-
ly drawn out of the cursed iayle of Babil-
lon, she should now also depart out of the
miser

L. NORMANDIE.

miserable ppyson of the bodie : when out
of the liuely sence of her conscience , dis-
putinge of her owne sinnes , of the gylte
of eternall death , and of the dreadfull
iudgement of God , not womanlike , she
extolled highly the grace of Christ , & with
like humblenesse and affiance embraced
it as a holly Anchoz. I doe so well remem-
ber her , howe she vttered these wordes ,
not onely plainely and distinctly , but also
with an vnaccustomed earnestnesse euen
at her last drawinge on , that me thinkes
I see her yet still . Therfore when I sawe
you on the contrary part , nobly stryuing
to subdue the heauinesse of your harte , I
marueled the lesse that a man shoulde be
scoute in sorowe , beyng helped with so
many and so goodly remedies . I will not
tarrie in rehearsing of others . This I
saye onely , when the Denill had framed
a buisse Labyzynth , of an vnmeasurable
heape of stumblingblockes for you , you
ouercame them all in such sorte , that you
maye not onely be a maete admonisher &
counsellor vnto others , but also that such
as are somewhat weakeharted , beyng
encouraged by your example , may wor-
thely

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thely take a new stoutenesse vnto them.
 We may see that the moderatenesse of an
 vpright minde is a very defensible towre,
 wherof you haue giuen a singular prowe,
 partely in other thinges, but specially
 herein, in asmuch as hauing lefte in your
 countrie, thinges whiche leade some men
 to ambition, and holde other some faste
 with their enticementes, you are touched
 with no desire at all of them: so that it
 may appeare you beare the want of them
 with as quiet and vpright a minde, as
 you did easely once renounce them. Of
 this your godlinesse like as I reape no
 small fruite and pleasure, so it is no won-
 der if I desire that parte thereof shoulde
 redoude vnto others. For I who a while
 agoe, (when you were the Kings Lieue-
 tenant of the same Citie where I was
 borne, and the Mayor of our Cittizens,)
 lamented your case, as for one farre re-
 moued from Christe: do now (since you
 are wholly addicted to Christe,) take you
 as my very owne, and embrace you as
 it were in the bosome of the vniuersall
 Church. Neuerthelesse I would that this
 booke shoulde be a demonstration after a
 sorte

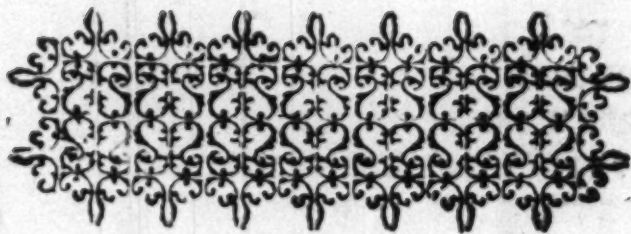
L. NORMANDIE.

sorte of my loue towarde you, euen vnto
 to the that know you not. For you your
 selfe demaunde no pledge. Surely there
 are betwene vs many bandes of trewe
 friendshippe: but there is no néerenesse of
 bloud, nor any other aliance, whiche may
 surmount our loue. And so little it grie-
 ueth your déere brother that you shoulde
 be made equall vnto him, y he accepteth
 it as a ful recôpence, in asmuch as he per-
 ceiueh him self to be beloued as entierly
 at your hande againe. Moreouer, in that
 this booke commeth forth somewhat la-
 ter than many wisshed, I would I might
 be lawfully excused by the auncient Pro-
 uerbe, whiche I haue cited in the begin-
 nyng: howe that thinge is done soone is
 nough, whiche is done well inough. But
 I am afrayde least many, whiche partely
 by reason of the largenesse of the matter,
 and partely by reason of the longe delay,
 haue promised to themselves some great
 thinge (I wote not what,) will be offen-
 ded when thei are deceiued of theyr hope,
 when they shall see suche thinges, as are
 mooste woorthie to haue bene set out with
 plentuousnesse, gloriouse, high stile,

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oꝛ behemencie of enditinge, and finally
with all the thunderinges, oꝛ artificious-
nesse cunnynge, and force of eloquence to
be touched briefly, basely, homelily, poore-
ly, nakedly, and sparely. Unto whome I
haue not ought to answere, but that I
haue followed that fashon which I de-
med beste. Wherein I requyre not that
they should subscribe vnto me, so they re-
fuse not to giue me leaue to dissent from
them. Farewell worthie man, and my
right deere brother in the Lord. At Ge-
neua the. viij. of Iuly, beyng the daye of
my byrthe. Anno 1550.

Thankes be to God.



Sentences taken out of the holy Scriptures, concerning Offences.

Out of the. 69. Psalme.

Let theyr table be made a snare to take
them withall, and let the thinges that
shoulde haue bene for theyr wealth, be vn-
to them an occasion of fallinge.

Let their eyes be blinded that they see
not, and euer bowe thou downe theyr
backes.

Bowre out thine indignation vppon
them, and let thy wrathfull displeasure
take holde of them.

Let theyr habitation be bolde: and no
man to dwell in theyr tentes.

For they persecute him whome thou
hast smitten, & they talke how they may
bere them whome thou hast wounded.

Let them fall from one wickednesse to
another: & not come vnto thy rightuous-
nesse.

Let them be wiped out of the booke of
the liuinge, and not be written amonge
the rightuous.

Esay

Eſay the.8. and Luke the.2.

BEholde he is appointed to the ſallyng
& to the riſinge vp of many in Iſraell,
and for a ſigne that is ſpoken againſt.

Eſay.57.

MAke ſtronger, make ſtronger the way,
make plaine the path, take away Ob-
ſtacle out of the waye of my people. Bi-
cauſe thus ſayeth the moſt highſt, dwel-
linge in eternitie, and whoſe name is ho-
ly. I doe inhabite the high and holy place
at once, and with the contrite and humble
ſpirit, that I maye quicken the ſpirite of
thoſe that are lowly, & quicken the harte
of ſuche as are contrite.

Mathew. II.

Bleſſed is he that is not offended in me.

Mathew. 18.

WE be to the worlde for Offences
ſake, for it muſt needes be that Ob-
ſtacles come: neuertheleſſe woe be to that
man

man by whome Offence dothe come. If
thy hande or thy foote offend thee, cut him
of and throwe him from thee. Better it is
for thee to enter into life lame or may-
med, than hauinge two handes or two
feete to be cast into everlastinge fire, and
if thine eye offende thee, pull him out and
throwe him from thee. It is better for thee
to enter into life with one eye, than ha-
uinge two eyes to be cast into hell fyre.

Mathew. 24.

See that no man misleade you. For ma-
ny shal come in my name, saying: I am
Christe, and shall deceiue many. Ye shall
heare of warres, and rumors of warres:
see that ye be not troubled. For all these
things must come to passe, but the ende
is not yet. For nation shall rise against
nation, & Kingdome against Kingdome,
and there shalbe pestilences, and famine,
and earth quakes in certeine places. All
these things are the beginninges of sor-
rowes. Then shall they deliuer you to be
punished, and shall kill you, and ye shalbe
hated of all nations for my names sake:
and then many shalbe offended, and one
shall

shall betraye another, and one shall hate
another, and many false Prophetes shall
arise, and deceiue many. And bicause ini-
quittie shall be multiplied, the charitie of
many shall waxe colde: but he that perse-
uereth to the ende shall be saued. And this
Gospell of the kingdome shall be preached
thzough the whole worlde for a witnesse
vnto all nations, and then shall that end
come.

Luke. 17.

I cannot otherwise be, but that Of-
fences muste come: notwithstandinge
too be vnto him by whome they come.

Iohn. 6.

From that time many of the Disciples
fell from him, and left him, and wal-
ked not any moze with him. And Iesus
saide to those twelue, will you also goe
your waies?

Romanes. 16.

I Beseeche you brethren, that ye consider
them whiche rayse debate and Offences
against

against the doctrine which you haue learned,
and decline from them.

I. Corinth. I.

WE preache Christe crucified, to the
Jewes a stumblingblock, and to
the Grækes foolishnesse: but vnto them
that are called as well Jewes as Grækes
Christe the power of God, and the wise-
dome of God.

I. Petr. 4.

AND this seemeth an absurde thing vn-
to them, that yee runne not together
with them into the same excessse of riot, as
they doe that speake euill of you, who shal
render an accompt vnto him, whiche is
readie to Iudge the quicke and the dead.

Finis. Julii. 23. 1565.

Prayse be to God.

The woorke of Iohn Cal-

uine concerning Offences, where

by in these daies diuers are feared,

& many also quight with

drawen from the pure Do-

ctrine of the Gospell,

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After that the Lord
hadde by many argu-
ments proued him self
to bee the very same
that shoulde come to
saue the Godly, he did
not without cause knit

vp his sayng with this sentence: *Blessed
is he that is not offended in me.* Certainly, he
not onely knew, that many things were
contained in the profession of his Gospell,
from which mannes nature dooth vtter-
ly abhorre, but also he foresawe, that
sworthwith by the subtile working of Sa-
than, should spring vp all kinde of lettes
and hinderances, that might brynge it ei-
ther in hatred or suspition of the worlde.
And surely it muste needes be fulfilled
which the holy Ghost hath spoken of him,

A

that

John Caluine concerninge

that he should bee the rocke of offence and the
stone to stumble at: Not bicause there is in
him any iuste cause to be offended at, as
wee shall anon see. But what skilles it?
For this is (as it were) his fatall condi-
tion, that as often as he offereth him selfe
to men, many of them doe stumble at him.
The whiche thinge if euer it happened
heretofore, we finde at this daye to be
trew, by examples almost innumerable.
Wherefore we ought so much the rather
to call continually to our remembrance,
his former warninge, to thintent it may
sticke faste in our mindes: least through
the stoppes which the Deuill will cast in
our waye, we beyng turned from him,
might also be depriued of that blessednes
which he promiseth to those that are his.
But how fewe are there that thinke her-
vppon: And on the contrarie parte, how
many are to be founde, whiche vnder the
colour of offences, doe eyther shonne the
Gospel altogether as it were some rocke:
or after they haue embraced it, yea and
somewhat profited in it, doe afterwarde
turne backe againe: Forasmuch then, as
there was no one matter (in my iudge-
ment,)

ment,) wheraboutes I might bestow my labour more profitably, I was not vnwillinge to take vppon me the handling hereof: specially seinge I had bounde my selfe by promise vnto certaine good men to do: who cease not to exact my promise as a dewe dette. Peraduenture it ought to haue bene performed sooner: but in asmuch as hitherto, partly other writings no lesse necessarie, and partely diuers weightie affayres haue helde me occupied, this is sone enough, if it be well enough.

Moreouer, before wee enter into the matter it selfe, we must see how this title will agree to Christ, who assuredly is the doore of eternall life, that he should be the stone of Offence, & the rocke to stumble at: & likewise howe it may come to passe, that the doctrine of the Gospel, beyng the onely way to saluation, should continually be matched with so many offences. This shalbe made the more euident, if we take our beginninge at the definition of an Offence. And now wheras the maner of liuing appointed to vs by God, is likened to a wale, or a race, which it becometh

John Caluine concerninge

vs to followe, hereuppon riseth another
Metaphor, that Offences should be called
what lettes so euer doe either leade vs a
wyie from our right course, or stoppe vs
by lpyng in the way, or giue occasion of
fallinge. Surely of all these, nothing can
be imputed vnto Christe, nor to his Gos-
pell. It is the office of Christe to leade vs
by the hãde, the right way to his Father.
Also he is the light of the world, by which
we are guided thither: the pathe whereby
we come thither: and the doore by which
we enter. It is the nature of the Gospel,
by taking away al maner of lettes, to set
vs opẽ an easie accesse into the kingdome
of God. Nothinge therefore is more disa-
greable to Christ or his Gospel, than the
name of Offence. This is an infallible
rule, that if Christe be esteẽmed as he is
in dæde, nothing is more contrary to his
nature, than Offence. In likewise is to
be thought of the Gospel. But this hap-
peneth through the lewdnesse of mē, that
as soone as Christe appæreth a farre of, by
e by they are wapped in with Offences,
or rather of them selues runne hedlonge
into them. Thus is he the stone to stum-
ble

le at , not bicause he giueth cause of stū-
 dling, but bicause occasion is wilfully ta-
 ken. Like as the Gospell beyng the doc-
 trine of peace and vnitie, is not withstan-
 dinge, the occasion of great troubles and
 turmoyles, bicause the wicked greedely
 take occasion thereof to set all thinges in
 a bzoyle. Now it were to much wronge
 to burden Christ with other mēs faultes,
 as if they were his owne , and to laye all
 the blame thereof on his necke , as if he
 were the offender. And that is it that Pe-
 ter sayeth: Be ye builded into a spirituall
 house, whiche is a liuely stone, reiected of
 men but chosen of God, and precious also
 to you that belæue: But vnto them that
 belæue not, he is the stone whiche the
 builders refused, the stone for them to
 stumble at, and the rocke for them to fall
 against. Behold how Christe offereth him
 selfe to al men, for a foundation to builde
 them selues vppon, that they may be the
 temple of God. Surely here is none Of-
 fence. Wherefore then should they be of-
 fended: forsooth bicause like a sort of blind
 Bapardes, they rushe wilfully againste
 that thyng, whereon they ought gently

A if to

to staye them selues.

Yet we see the malice, or at least wise the corruption of men is suche, that that thinge which happeneth extraordinarily vnto Christe, followeth as customably, as if it were mooste of all pertinent to his Office. Now come I vnto them, who otherwise refusinge not to embrace the Gospell of Christe, would neuerthelesse haue it without Offences. I haue to doe with such as are Christians: Would they haue Christe free from all Offence? then must they goe forge thee a newe one: For the sonne of God cannot be any other, than of such sorte as he is preached in the Scriptures. Or els they muste alter all mens natures and dispositions, and goe make all the worlde newe agayne. We heare what the Scripture saith: This is incident, not onely to y person of Christ, but also to all the whole doctrine: neither is it lastinge for a time onely, but it shall continue through the whole course of the doctrine. Howe preposterous then are thei, who in these daies reject the doctrine of the Gospell now springing vp agayne, onely in this respecte, because they finde therein

therein the selfe same thinge, that was
 tolde of befoze by the Prophetes and the
 Apostles. And yet for all that, they wilbe
 counted Christians: what if they had
 chaunced to haue bene in those daies, whe
 the Gospell was first of al newly preached,
 at which time there was almost no kinde
 of Offence but it swarmed out of the Gos
 pells: How soone would they haue sepe
 rated them selues from Christ: how would
 they haue quaked for feare, least of neuer
 so slight a touche they mighte haue bene
 blasted with some infection: If they saie
 they woulde not haue done so then: why
 are they so spiceröscienced in these daies:
 why do they not now also acknowledge
 the same markes in Christe: But an Of
 fence is an odious thyng, & to modest na
 tures horrible. Who denieth that: Yet
 ther do I say that Offences are willing
 ly to be sought after. Let vs shunne them
 as much as may be. But a Christen mans
 hart ought to be fortified in sache wise,
 that what Offences so euer bzeake out
 vpon him, he neuer forsake his place, nor
 swarue from Christe one heare bredth.
 Who so euer is not furnished with this

constancie that he may wade through all
Offences vnvanquished, vnderstandeth
not yet what his Christendome auayleth
him. But it is a harde matter to resiste
Offences, specially consideringe our fee-
blennesse & imbecillitie. I graunt it surely;
how be it to desire to be priuiledged from
that incōmoditie, whereunto we see the
moste holy name of Christe & his Gospell
subiect, that is vtterly against all reason.
Therefore they that at this daye alledge,
that Offences are the cause why they dare
not giue their cōsent to the pure doctrine
of the Gospell which we professe, but are
rather horribly afrayde to come at it, I
woulde warne all such to take heede, that
in steede of Christe they set not the selues
vp an Idoll. For this must be taken for a
sure grounde, that if we will shunne all
Offences, we must therewithall also vt-
terly renounce Christe, who if he were
not the stone of Offence, were not the
trewe Christe.

Howbeit I know there be fower sortes
of men whome Offences withholde from
Christe, or at least whiche vnder this co-
lour are enemies to the Gospell. The feare
of

of Offences holdeth many backe concey-
ued of a certaine naturall modestie, in so
much that they dare not ones take a taste
of the Gospell. Other some beyng more
slothful and vnapt to be taught, do hin-
der them selues rather by dulnesse than
by wilfulnes. And there are very many,
who beyng sotted with pryde & the vaine
opinion of that wisdom which they are
farre from, are to themselves an occasion
of Offence through their owne arrogan-
cie. There are also which maliciously and
of set purpose do gather together all Of-
fences, and inuent many newe of theyr
owne braynes, and that not so muche for
ill will they beare towarde Offences, as
for hate of the Gospell, to the intent they
maye by some meanes or other raise a
slander of it. Yea rather whereas they
themselves are the Authours of Offences,
of very spight most impudently they turne
the blame thereof al together vppon the
Gospell. With such slanders the booke
of Sadoler, Eckius, Pyghius, Cochlaus, and
such like, are to be seene thoroughly strewed.
The first and seconde sorts are to be
dealt withall somewhat more gently: but

the thirde and fourth sorte are to be en-
treated more sharply. For what point is
it, I say not of humanitie, (for what hu-
manitie can ye looke for at this cruell
beastes handes?) but of honestie, to obiect
reprochefully against the sonne of God,
the thinges for whiche they them selues
are altogether to blame: But wee will
looke better by these things after ward,
my minde was onely at the beginninge,
to admonishe my readers what kinde of
men I purposed to deale with: to thintet
they might thereby iudge, what they had
to looke for in this litle booke. The weake
and vnskilfull shall finde here, wherewith
to arme them selues for the ouercompyng
of all Offences. The wicked shall finde as
much as shall suffice to disproue their ab-
hominable slaunders. It is a greate mat-
ter that I promise, but I trust I shall sa-
tisfie indifferent Iudges. For it is not to
be hoped that I shoulde heale the diseases
of all men. And I haue alreadye condem-
ned him of greate folly, if any man will
endeuer to bringe to passe, that Christe
shoulde not be a stumbleng blocke to the
wicked. The Scripture muste nedes be
fulfil

fulfilled, which hath tolde befoze that it
shuld come so to passe. And I do not like
that this my trauell shoulde worke any
other effect, than that their rage shoulde
be moze and moze inflamed. But I haue
respect to the weakelings, whose faith, as
the wicked sozt goe about to shake down,
so it behoueth vs (as it were by puttinge
vnder our handes) to stay it vp. As cōcer-
ninge them that be desperate, it sufficeth
me if I may repressse their malapertnesse,
oz at leastwise if I may brynge to passe,
that the infection of their payson maye
spred it selfe no farther.

And soz asmuch as what matter so e-
uer a man entreateth of, distinctions are
wonte to giue great light vnto it, I will
here make a bylese distinction betwæne
the chiefe kindes of Offences, which haue
bothe troubled the course of the Gospell
from the beginninge, and also doe hinder
it at this day. Therfoze of Offences, (if it
seeme good) let vs cal some inward, which
(at leastwise as men suppose) springe of
the Gospell it self: oz although they grow
otherwise, yet are they almoste euer an-
nered vnto it. And let vs call other some
outward,

outwarde, as springing out of heades all
together straunge and remoued from the
Gospell. Of the first kinde are those, that
haue their beginning as it were enclosed
in the very doctrine of the Gospell. Paule
saith, that the Gospell is foolishnesse to
the worldly wisemen. The whiche is
true: not onely because the homely and
vnpainted simplicitie therof is had in de-
rision by them, but also because many
things are therein contained, whiche to
mans iudgement are not onely very ab-
surde, but also very toyes to laughe at.

For wheras it is preached that the sonne
of God, who is eternall life, did take our
fleshe vpon him, & became a mortall man:
and that by his death was purchased vnto
vs life, by his cōdemnation our righte-
uousnesse, by his curse our saluation: it
abhorreth so muche from the cōmon sense
of men, that the sharper twitted any man
is, the sooner he casteth it of. And now se-
inge the Gospell spoyleth vs of all prayse
of wisdom, vertue, and righteousness,
leauinge nothinge to vs of our owne but
utter shame, it cannot other wise be, but
it muste greatly offende vs. For such is
the

the pryde of our fleshe, that no man will willingly suffer those thinges to be wrested from him, with the vaine imagination whereof we are all puffed vp. Hereupon riseth a most sharpe conflict. These thinges also touchyng the denyng of our selues, the crucifyng of the olde man, the despisinge of the world, the embracing of the Crosse, howe soze do they with their sharpnesse Offende vs? But the experience hereof is yet farre harder, when the faith is tried by persecutions and other calamities. Besides these, there are other thinges also, whiche partely seeme vnto mans reason Paradoxes and thinges full of absurditie, as the thinges we spake of first: and specially do minister occasion of crabbed questions, whiche anon after do also hatche as many Offences, that is to say, innumerable. Such is the doctrine of Predestination and other like.

Of the seconde sorte are these: that as soone as the Gospell springeth vp, by and by followe turmoyles and seditions: the wickednesse of many whiche before was hidden, is discouered: many fettes and monstrous heresies vnhearde of before,

John Caluine concerninge

do swarme vp: many do proudly take occasion of more licentious libertie: many of the professors, by the filthie example of their life, do shame the doctrine it selfe: some whiche for a time seemed very fervent, do not onely ware lazie, but like most horrible rebelles do vtterly fall fro Chryste. Moreover the Deuill by wonderfull craftes, setteth together by the eares, good & otherwise sincere teachers of the truth, to the intent thzough their infirmitie to caste some slander vppon the doctrine. Furthermoze bicause that of the very newnesse thereof, others take libertie to be bolder than they should be, it is ordinarie also in new matters beyng, yet scarcely settled in due order, to marke whatsoeuer is done amisse. In this forme let these and such like be.

The third sorte doth partly consist of surmised slanders, and partly springeth of the vnthakfulnesse of men: while they fetch from a farre sundry accusations, whiche they maliciously and falsly charge the Gospell with, to the intent therby to make it hated. Many also of the that are counted faithfull, beyng intangled with
men

men of an other, and almoste cleane contrary profession, while they seeke meanes to nourishe frendshippe, are caried away with ambition, as with a tempest, that they had rather caste of the Gospell, than dissent from the common trade of lining. Seinge therfore, that I muste encounter with so many and so sundrie monsters, it was needeful to make this said distinctiō, befoze & it had bene for none other cause but this: that if the infinitenesse of the matter would not suffer all thinges to be rehearsed particularly, the Readers might yet haue recourse to the generall. Therefore to the intent I may beginne to entreate of the firste sorte, it falleth ill out for the highstomacked men and suche as are giuen to statelynesse, that the holy Ghost bleseth a homely and base kinde of speakyng in the Scriptures. And such as are accustomed to elegācie and finenesse, doe either refuse or lothe this rude style cladde with no colours of Rhetoricke. In this behalfe I like not to make y defence whiche other haue intreated of: namely that such disdeine riseth of vnskilfulnes, for asmuche as Moyses and diuers of the

Iohn Caluine concerninge

Prophetes were as fine in their owne language, as the Philosophers and Orators which are with high commendation and best likinge red amonge the Greekes and Latines. For although it be knowen to be so in deede, to suche as are skilfull in the Hebrew tongue, yet notwithstanding in asmuch as Amos is no lesse a Prophet than Esay, & that Ieremie obtained the same degree that Dauid had, of whome not withstandinge, the enditinge is not a like eligant, but rather the stile of Ieremie sauozeth of a Townesman, and the stile of Amos hath a smatch of a Herdmā: I willingly confesse, that the holy Scriptures wherin the heauenly Philosophie is wholly conteined, are voide, not onely of the flourishinges of Rhetoricians, but also of such meane garnishynge, as euen the meaner learned sort doe looke for. But they are ouer squeymishe, that finde the lesse sauour in them for that. And such as vnder this pretext doe abase & authoritie of them, are to vnequall and malicious. Paule doth not onely graunt that he wāteeth eloquence, but also preacheth it openly and glozieth in it, ought his doctrine therfore

doctrine therfore to be y lesse set by: Nay
rather, wheras is no flourishing of words
to cleare the eyes withall, there he war-
ranteth the strength of the heauenly wise-
dome to shine the better. Neyther dothe
he teache any other thinge vnto the .iiij.
chapter of the firste Epistle to the Corin-
thians, than that the faith is then verely,
deuely founded in the wisdom & poure
of the holy Ghoste, when the mindes are
not seduced with finenesse of enditinge &
wittie handlinge of the matter. And this
doth every one of vs know for a certen-
tie, by the assured experience of our faith.
Surely if the doctrine of John or Paule
were painted with the colours of Demo-
sthenes or Cicero, it might peraduenture
haue more grace to allure the Readers,
but of weight to moue the consciences,
and of worthinesse to purchase it self au-
thoritie, it should not haue the hundreth
part that it hath. For the Maiestie of God
uttereth it selfe there liuely: in so muche
that they are compelled, who so euet rea-
deth it, (onlesse it be suche whose mindes
the Deuill hath astonied,) to thinke that
it is euen God that speaketh vnto them.

And therefore they are to dull witted,
which take no taste nor sanour in y^e Scrip-
tures, bicause thei finde there no entice-
mentes of speach. But what if God will
perce the hart througħ & througħ, rather
than with pleasant tinclinge, delight the
eares? For wheras Paule, saith that the
treasure of the Gospell is bestowed in
earthē vessels, to the intent the power of
God maye more clēerely appeare in the
weaknesse of men, it agreeth very wel to
our present purpose. Thus much I may
lawfully take vpon me to say: that there
are no disputatiōs of the Philosophers so
suttle, whiche are able more strongly to
perswade: no thunderinges of the Ora-
tours, that are able more vehemently to
moue affections: than is the simple & rude
stile of the scripture. For who seeth not,
how by the wōderfull prouidence of God
it is so prouided, y^e in a base kinde of spea-
king, the effectuall workyng of the spirit
should nakedly much better shew it self.
They wil needes haue their eares deligh-
ted with the sweetenesse of Eloquence:
But God who formed mans tunge, will
hammer with vs. Howbeit in his stāne-
ringe

King he thundereth: and beareth him selfe
 out as haule & stately a grauntie, to sube
 we mens mindes, as if the cunningest
 of all Oratours, should out of the treaso
 rie of his arte, put forth of his best stufte,
 what so euer he had there in store. This
 way Paule teacheth spirituall thinges to
 be applied to spirituall thinges: and we
 our selues doe cleerely see, how mightie,
 Gods playne and simple truthe is of it
 selfe. Men are then to stately, if soz so
 small a matter as this is, they disdain to
 Heede the Scriptures, or thinke the au
 thoritie of the heauenly doctrine, to be
 therefore of lesse importance. But let vs
 suffer the to haue still their owne delight.
 And as soz our owne selues, if with the
 eares of our harte we harken to God
 when he speaketh, the rude & unpainted
 speache shall so little offende vs, that
 it shall rather lifte vs vp to consider the
 maiestie of the spirite, appearinge in the
 same. For so at the treasures of wisdoms
 to be digged vp, whiche Paule admoni
 sheth vs to be hidde in Christe. And
 hereof (if any man will) he maye finde
 somewhat in the firste Chaptre of mine

John Caluine concerninge

Institutions, where I dispute of the authoritie of the Scripture.

Now, to the intent we may procede to the curing of Offences of this sorte, is it meete I should frame a newe prouinge from point to point, of the opinions which are not delightfull to mans reason? In good faith that were an endlesse matter, seinge those thinges may be fetched both out of mine and out of othermens trauels. And besides that, it were an vnprofitable labour, to alledge the testimonies of the Scriptures for this purpose. For what shall it auayle me to declare the diuinitie of Christe plainely out of the Scripture, to suche kinde of men. Verely they will boldly reiect what so euer I shall bring. Yea rather this is a cause why they reiect all the whole Scripture, by reason that in their opinion, it seemeth to be an absurditie, as often as they meete with any thinge that liketh them not. And therefore they seeme then moste wise in their owne conceites, when they laughe our simplicitie to skorne, in that by assured faith we embrace those thinges, whiche not onely wante prowe to the outward senses,

Senses, but are also to mans iudgement incredible. What idiot (say they) would suffer himselfe to be perswaded, where he seeth no reason to leade him. To foolish were I, if I would stande in contention with them, by such reasons as the sharpnesse of mans witte atteyneth to. For whereas we beleue that Christe was manifested to be God in the fleshe: Paule confesseth the same to be a misterie, farre removed from all perceiuerance of man. What then if they would object vnto vs that it were an absurditie, and that we out of hande did readely wash our hands of it, in such sort that they should be compelled to stande dumble, onlesse they would impudently barke against vs: yet coulde I not bring to passe, but that they would counte vs moze dulheaded than any Idolotres, that would hange onely vppon the bare Scriptures, in the debatinge of so weightie matters. Wherefore I will turne me to those that are tempted with such kinde of stumblinge blockes, but are neuerthelesse as yet curable.

Vnto such I will minister none other Medicine, than that whiche Paule hath

John Caluine concerninge

prescribed, namely that they learne to be
folish to the worldwarde, to the entent
they may be able to conceiue the heauenly
wisedome. We meane not by this foolish-
nesse, that men should haue their wittes
altogether dulled or amazed, neither doe
we bid, that such as are learned in liberal
sciences, should cast away the knowledge
of the: or that suche as are endewed with
handsomnesse of witte, shoulde become
brutish, as though he could not be a Chri-
stian onlesse he were liker a beast than a
man. The Christian profession requi-
reth vs to be children, not in vnderstan-
dinge, but in malice. Howbeit least any
man shoulde hyprge into the schoule of
Christe, an assurance either in his owne
witte, or in his owne learning: least any
man either swelling in pride, or ouercome
with lothsomnesse, should by and by put
from him that which is laide before him,
before he haue thoroughly tasted of it, if
we do but offer our selues willinge to be
taught, we shall finde here no let at all.
But they that are wise (I saye in their
owne conceites only) to them their owne
pride is cause of fallinge. And why for
Because

Bicause the sonne of God hath so much
abased him selfe, as to become thy bro-
ther, and ioyned his eternall Godhead to
thy mortall flesh, shall that be a lette to
thee, that thou shouldest not come vnto
him: wilt thou withdraue thy selfe the
further from God, bicause from his vn-
measurable heighte he hath humbled him
selfe to come downe to thee: what if he
shoulde call thee vp into the height of
heauen, whereto there is no access for
thee of thy selfe: how couldest thou make
waye to him so farre of, that arte offen-
ded at hym beyng so nere hande?

But thou sayest, it is a monstrous thinge
to thee, when thou hearest that God is
become mortall. And what other thing
is that else, than that God beyng im-
mortall dwelled in our mortall flesh?
For the matter it selfe crieth out, that
this thinge was not in vayne preached
of John, howe there was scene in him
suche glory, bothe as was mete for the
sonne of God, & also as shewed no darke
token of his owne Godhead: onlesse it
were thy pleasure to deuise monsters, &
couldest surely finde no monsters here.

Iohn Caluine concerninge

Our faith hath, that God toke vpon him
a bodie subiect to death. Here thou hea-
rest a Mysterie whiche thou oughtest to
honour, and not a tale to scoffe at: nor a
Monster to stare at. Rather impute it
to thine owne vnthankfulnessse, that thy
wonderinge at so inestimable a grace,
swalloweth not vp all thoughtes repug-
nant vnto it. I know these thinges are
spoken in baine vnto many. Neither is it
hidden from me, what a laughyng they
make at vs. because we seeke for life in the
death of Christe, grace in his curse, and
rightuousnesse in his condemnation.
Merely (say they) so floweth colde water
out of a burninge fornice, & light spring-
eth so out of darknesse. And hereuppon
they conclude: that nothinge is moze fo-
lish than we, which hope for life at a dead
mans hande, whiche aske forgiveness of
a condemed person, whiche fetch the grace
of God out of one that was cursed, & flee
for refuge to the Crosse, as to the onely
authour of everlastinge saluation. And
therewithal laughyng at our simplicitie,
they thinke them selues very sharpe wit-
ted. But I say, they wante the thinges
whiche

which is chiefest in trewe wisdomē: that
is to witte, the feelinge of the conscience.
For what maner of wisdomē, what ma-
ner of Reason, what maner of Judgemēt
is it, where the conscience is dulled? But
whercof cometh all this, that they should
so abhorre the principels of Christian Re-
ligion: but that the Deuill hath altoge-
ther so sotted them, that they are touched
with no feare of Goddes iudgement, nor
conscience of sinne: I said a little before,
that there was none other way for vs to
come to the wisdomē of God, than by be-
comminge foolles to the worlde. But of
this humblenesse, like as of all the rest of
our Religion, the foundation is consciēce
and the feare of the Lorde: the whiche be-
inge taken away, in vaine thou endeuo-
rest to make vp the buildinge. Therfore,
who so euer will easely vanquishē all the
kindes of Offences by me mentioned, let
him no more but enter deēpely into him-
selfe. For as soone as he shall acknow-
ledge his owne wretchednesse, the way
as well for him vnto Christ, as for Christ
vnto him, that by and by be paved & made
leuell. The voice of the Prophet crieth,
13 v prepare

John Caluine concerninge

prepare y^e the waies of the Lorde. And
what other thing is meant by preparyng
of this way: but that men knowinge in
how great distresse they were, should be-
ginne to long after Chyist, whome here-
tofore they lothed standynge in theyr
owne conceite. By the same meanes also
we prepare vs a way vnto Chyist: yea ra-
ther, that same godly longynge of ours,
shalbe to vs in steede of horses & shippes,
to carie vs safely ouer al letts. For like
as to the attaininge of the higher sciēces,
is requisite a fine & well furnished witte,
so to this heauenly Philosophie, is requi-
site a subdewed minde. For what taste
can there be, where as is lothinge: what
accesse can there be, where the hart is en-
closed & locked vp with pryncly hardnesse.
In bayne therfore shalte thou talke of
Chyiste, saying vnto such as being vnfei-
nedly humbled, do feele how great neede
they haue of a redemptor, by whose benefite
they may escape the destruction of eternall
death. As many therfore as will not wil-
fully be decciued and so perishe, let them
learne to begin with this lesson, to knowe
that they haue to doe with God, to whome
they

They must ones giue an accompt: Let the
also set before their eyes that iudgement
seate whiche maketh euen the Angels to
tremble. Let them thinke that the Devil is
harde at hande to accuse them. Let them
herken to their owne consciences bearyng
witnes against the. Let them not harden
their hartes against the prickes of sinne,
& then there shalbe no danger for them at
all, of finding any thing to be ashamed at
in the death of Christ, or to scare them fro
him with the slander of his crosse, or fi
nally to withdrau them selues from him
for any let. Of this thinge ye may behold
a very goodly image in the womā of Sa
maria, Who as longe as Christ disputed
with her of the mysticall drawinge of the
water of life, was pleasantly disposed to
prattle with him & to ouerthwart him, &
was pretely bold to dally & iest with him
but as soon as he had ones touched her co
science, by casting her in the teeth with her
whoredome, by & by forgetting her merie
conceits, she reuerently acknowledged
him for a Prophet, whom newly before,
she liked not to disquiet with her taunts.
Therefore whosoever is offended by Christ.

John Caluine concerninge

for ioyninge his Godhead in one persone
with the Manhood, or whosoener thin-
keth it an absurde thinge, to seeke lyfe at
him that was dead, and to call the cursed
Crosse the wellspringe of all grace and
saluation, lette vs assure our selues, that
they are therefore offended, bicause that
beyng vtterly voide of the feare of God,
they haue no taste at all of the spirituall
doctrine. Wherefore let not their asto-
nishment be a stumblinge blocke to vs,
but rather let vs be carried from the hu-
maine nature of Chryste, to the glorie of
his Godhead, whiche maye turne all cu-
rious questions into admiration: let vs
be directed from the death of Chryste, to
his glorious Resurrection, whiche may
wipe away all the slander of his Crosse:
lette vs passe from the weakenesse of the
fleshe to the poure of the Spirite, whiche
may swallow vp all folishe thoughtes.
Sure it is that Paule was endewed with
suche an vnderstandinge, when he saide
thus: I am not ashamed of the Gospell of
Chryste, for it is the poure of God to the
saluation of them that beleue. For by
these wordes he meaneth that none are
ashamed

ashamed of the Gospell, but suche as take
not holde of y healthfull power thereof:
moreouer he declareth by and by after,
that it cannot otherwise be taken holde
of, than when the wrath of God is made
manifest to our destruction. Who can
now maruell, that meate hath no sauour
with them, that haue no taste: For who
so euer is so astonied, y he slepeth soundly
beyng touched with no reuelation of the
wrath of God, he differeth nothing in the
acknowledginge of Christe, from such as
in discerning of saouours, haue their taste
taken from them. As for suche men, we
are not wonte to passe so muche of them,
that any of vs would therefore lothe our
meate, bicause they refuse it. But this
kinde of Offence, which riseth likewise
out of the doctrine, is more violent and
more common: bicause that whereas of
Nature we like well of our selues, and
woulde haue all our owne thinges to be
had in high estimation: we finde nothing
left vnto vs there, sayng vtter pouertie
of all good thinges. For there al the wise-
dome of men is condemned of follie, and
their rightuousnesse & vertue is brought
to

to a thing of naught. Now this thing seemeth so intollerable to our proude flesh, that for very spight they gnashe their teeth, as many as haue not learned to denie the selues. For men are euer desirous to keepe somewhat of their owne: & albeit that in some behalfe, they giue place to God against their willes, yet they can by no meanes abide, that all should be taken from them at ones. At the beginning they seeme very wise: they are puffed up with trust in their owne power: & they like well of their owne rightuousnesse. Afterwarde beinge admonished by God: & partly also conuicted by experience, they finde that their wisdomes stakereth, and that their power and rightuousnesse halteth. And yet they cannot by any meanes be persuaded to beleue, that they are utterly destitute of all wisdomes & rightuousnes. And what other thinge is this, than as it were by composition to parte stake with God: Now the Gospell pronounceth that light whiche we imagine our selues to haue, to be utter darknesse: and it in such sorte leaueth vnto vs no droppe at all of rightuousnes, that is pronounceth it to be stinkinge filthinesse before God, what so euer

auer we bringe of our selues. Perceat the
wozldly wisemen begin to chaunge, & the
hipocrites become madde. And this was
the chiefe cause, why at the beginning of
Christes kingdome, all the sectes of the
Philosophers, together wth al the politicke
gouernours, did set theselues so earnestly
against the Gospell. For they might not
endure to haue their owne wisdomes de-
faced, which thei theselues honozed as an
Idoll, & for the which thei knew theselues
to be had in great reputacion. Would God
the aunclent Doctors had made lesse cur-
tesie to offende suche kinde of men. For
while they studied to make medicines to
allwaie their maladie, thei left vnto vs a
watrish and vnkindly p^{er}ce of diuinitie.
Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Basil,
Chrysostome, and the reste of that order,
would neuer haue spokē so of their owne
frēe motion: but whiles they sought a mi-
tigation to appease y^e wozldly wisemē, or
to auoide their displeasure, thei confoun-
ded heauen and earth togither. To bring
mā altogether vnder lōte, was a hatefull
thing, & repugnant to cominon reason: &
therfore they sēke a mitigation approch-
ping nearer to the fleshly vnderstandinge:
but

but in the meane time, the purenesse of
the doctrine is prophaned. Nothing then
had bene better, than to haue crushed the
byle harde, to the intent iudgemēt might
be giuen by the filthinesse of the matter.
But nothinge is more euident, than that
men haue allwayes bene stirred vp with
outragious pryde, to make adw agaynst
the Gospell. The same cause also moued
the Iewes to that beastly rage, where-
with the Euangelistes, & specially Luke
and Paule, do witnes them to haue ben
carried. For they stroue in defence of their
rightuousenesse, whiche was nothing els
than smoke, and yet it seemed to them
more precious than Christe. Both of the
ranne with might and mayne to assaulte
the Gospell: but the Iewes ranne more
furiously: whereby it might manifestly
appere, that nothinge is more spightfull
than the Hypocrites. Of this Offence
Christ him selfe speaketh generally: whē
he saith, that the childezen of this world
do hate the light of the Gospell, least
their euill workes should appere. For
were the Gospell put awaye, then as
though the light were clerely quenched,
the

the deceitful and transitorie wisdom of
 the flesh shineth in darknesse, and reig-
 neth like a Prince: and counterfette holi-
 nesse spreadeth her winges proudly eue-
 ry way about her. But as soone as Christe
 the onely Sonne of rightuousnesse, with
 the brightnesse of his Gospell sheweth
 him selfe, those thinges which heretofore
 occupied the chiefe rounne of honour, do
 not onely banishe away, but are as little
 sette by as dunge. This verely is the
 ground of all their griefe: This is that
 stumblinge blocke, whereof Paule spra-
 keth in another place, that goynge about
 to stablish their owne rightuousnes, they
 haue not bene subiect to the rightuous-
 nesse of God. Whiche thinge also we see
 this day by experience. For ye shall see
 fewe that are puffed vp with the perswa-
 sion of their owne rightuousnesse, but they
 be obstinate enemies of the truth. As for
 the Hypocrites, they rage against it like
 madde dogges, even to the death. And
 what other cause had Bunell to turne fro
 the Gospell, but that being a man bozne
 to ostentation, and standinge so much in
 his owne conceite, he coulde ill abide to

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John Caluine concerninge

be made fellowlike with his inferiours? This one man I haue named for examples sake, woulde God he had not many like vnto him. But what is there for vs to do? Let vs suffer them to fall against the stumblyng stone, that the like may happen to them, that happened in times past to the Iewes: whyle they endeavour to stablish their owne rightuousnesse (saith S. Paule) they are exempted from the rightuousnesse of God, and so it commeth to passe, that they perishe in their owne blindenesse. Lette vs, I saye, offer our selues emptie and naked vnto Christe willingly, to the entent he may fill vs with his goodnesse, and clothe vs with his glorie, & then shall this kinde of stumblyng blocke be abolished.

But I should take in hande as it were to lade out the Sea, if I woulde searche out and reherse in order, all causes of Offences, whiche wretched men make to them selues out of the doctrine of the Scripture, to their owne destruction.

For they stumble, not onely throughe rashnesse when they meete with any difficulte thinge, but they make their vagaries

ties wilfully and of set purpose through
all the rough places, as though they had
none other pleasure, but to wearie their
witte about crabbed questions. What so
euer hath any likelihode of absurditie be
it neuer so little, that gather they busilie
and sisse it narrowly, least they shoulde
seeme ouer light of credite. Also if there
be any likelihode of disagreement & con-
trarietie, as there semeth to be in many
places of Scripture, that catch they holde
on greedely, and heapinge together all
suche maner of testimonies, they make a
boastinge of their owne sharpe witte.
This kinde of men are troubled with a dis-
ease almost incurable. For wheras they
are ashamed to be ignorant in any thing,
yet may they find in their hearts to learne
nothinge. But forasmuche as with their
bragging they many times wounde the
consciences of the simple, & such as other-
wise would be apte inough to be taught,
it is needefull to touche this parte of of-
fendinge lightly in fewe wordes: not
bicause they can be remoued with fewe
wordes, against whome a longe volume
would not suffice. But first & foremost we

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are

are all to be warned, that in readyng of Scriptures we keepe that waye, whiche the spirite of God sheweth: whiche assuredly shalbe plaine and leuell vnto suche as aspire to Christewarde. Secodly that we couet not to be, or to seeme to be witty, in wrytinge knottes of questions. Lastly, that we doe not by and by caste it by, if we finde any thinge vnknown or darke to vs. This is a vice worthe no small rebuke, that the ignorance of many, makes them by and by to burste out into lothinge. But surely he giueth small reuerence vnto God, whiche denieth y to be his worde, whatsoeuer his witte doth not reache vnto. For what else is this? than to measure Gods infinite wisdom by our small capacite of vnderstanding, whiche were as muche as to measure the whole worlde with one finger. But if we graunt the Scripture to haue proceeded from God, lette vs not maruell that many things are cōteined therein, which are farre aboue our capacite. Finally in Godlinesse, this is the meane & order of beynge wise: to strue to get right vnderstandinge thzough the obedience of faith.

Of the Offence that springeth of the
 Harpenesse & painefulnesse of the Crosse,
 and the seueritie of the doctrine. our Lord
 speaketh in the Parable, where he like-
 neth the Gospell vnto sowynge of corne.
 For, suche as sayle when persecution ap-
 procheth, he likeneth to the corne that
 sprange vp, but had no roote. And those in
 whome the doctrine is choked with cares
 of this worlde, he likened to corne growe
 vp amonge thornes; whiche hinder his
 fruitfulnessse and ripinge. These kindes
 of Offences doe somewhat differ: howbeit
 for auoiding tediousnes, I comprehend
 them both vnder one kinde. We heare
 Chryste tell all his Disciples, that euery
 of the must take vp his crosse. We heare
 him exhortinge them to abide all kinde of
 hatred, daungers, and reproches for his
 names sake: We heare him giue war-
 ninge, that it cannot otherwise come to
 passe, but that we shalbe hated of the vni-
 godly, and that afflictions muste follow vs
 continually in this worlde. We heare him
 declaryng, that all they are blisfed, which
 suffer persecution for the trutthes sake.
 This is the greatest stumblinge blocke
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Iohn Caluine concerninge

that maye be to fleashe and blond. For
of nature, we feare the Crosse all of vs.
And therefore many for this cause doo
starte backe, who else woulde willing-
ly embrace the Sonne of God, yf they
coulde seuer him from the Crosse. But
whereof commeth this Offence, but of
our owne tender nesse? Chyiste com-
maundeth vs to die with hym, that we
might be partakers of his life: by ac-
companyng him in his Passions, he is
minded to bryng vs to his glorie. It
is no vnequall condition, if there were
any equitie in vs, But many woulde
fayne haue Chyiste, to bee a gloriousse
Chyiste, buryng the mention of his
Crosse, whiche cannot be. And yet not
contented therewith, they laie the faulte
whiche is in them selues, vppon the pure
Doctrine. So in times past, the Ca-
pernaïtes cried out that the sayinge of
Chyiste was harde, when the hardenesse
was in them selues and not in the say-
inge: Doe we maruell if the Sonne of
God woulde haue his Disciples hartie,
and not meyrcockes and womanlike? Doe
we maruell if he woulde haue his Ante-
signes

signes caried by them, and commaunde them to fighte vnder his banner: Perce cousin vnto this disease, is that other whereof I haue spoken. For denyng of the deathe is so troublesome a thinge, that it feareth many from enteringe into Christes schoole, and thrusteth other some quite out of doores, that were already entered. They will metely well endure to heare original sinne and the common vices of nature disputed vpon: They can well finde in their hartes, that the grace of God and the benefites of Christe should be set forth with deuote prayse: but when it cometh to healing of euery seuerall mans diseases, because the medicine is sharpe, they stubboznlly refuse it: so ye may see many, to whome the Gospel was pleasant at the firste taste, whiche thinke it twofold bitter aswone as it hath pricked theyr consciences. Merely, seing the worde of God is a sharpe two edged sworde, and seynge the properties thereof is, not onely to reprove and reprehensive by outward meanes, but also to searche to the bottome of the harte, to perce the rowe all the marke, to discerne betwene

affections and thoughtes, and finally to sacrifice the whole man vnto God: these folke cannot abide to haue their woundes touched: Some desire to haue libertie left them to steale: some to get by extortion: some to follow whoredome: and some to haunt riottynge and excesse. All couet to runne the race of their vanitie without checke. What wonder then is it, if they turne themselves from Christ: But some man will say, this is to shewe the cause of offence, but not to take it away. I answer, that the disease was first to be declared, to the entent that remedie might afterwarde be sought. The nicenesse of mennes mindes was to be corrected, rather than clokinges thereof to be sought, whiche coulde nothinge further vs, and yet nourishe vice. But it is a high matter. Who denies that: notwithstanding we must strine, and that not by our owne strength, but by the strength of Christ: who as he sendeth vs out to the battell, so also he furnissheth vs with armour and weapon to winne victorie. And, if we vnderstand what availeth this saying: Blessed are they that suffer persecution for rightousnes

rightuousnesse sake: how easie were it for
 vs to winde our selues, not onely out of
 this Offence, but also of all other, what-
 soeuer the worlde and the fleshe seeke to
 enforce vpon vs. Persecution is so trou-
 blesome to thee, that thou startest from
 Chyriste. And why? Forsooth bicause thou
 knowest not what Chyriste maye auaille
 thee. The care of this present worlde car-
 rieth thee away: and that is bicause thou
 hast no taste of the worlde to come. Co-
 uetousnesse burneth thee: verely bicause
 thou knowest not yet, which are the true
 riches. Thou arte drowned with ambi-
 tion: bicause vndoubtedly thou knowest
 not to glozie in the Lorde. Gluttonie,
 fleashly luste, pompe, or other vaine de-
 lightes entice thee to forget thy God: and
 that cometh to passe, bicause as yet thou
 art ignorant of that swætenesse, whiche
 the Prophete testifieth to be layed vp for
 them that feare God. Finally, it is no
 maruell though there be fewe true Chri-
 stians to be founde, bicause there are few
 that haue learned that Chyriste is so much
 worthe, that all thinges els are to be
 counted as dunge. But another place

will becomme a matter for exhortations. Here
I muste so intreate of Offences, that it
maye appeare to whome they ought of
righte to be imputed. But why doe I
make such a disputinge of euery mannes
priuate miseries, seynge the state of the
vniuersall Church dothe containe in it
farre greater occasion of Offence? First,
it neuer shineth with suche outwarde
beautie, that the senses of men may dis-
cerne therein the kingdome of God. Se-
condely, if it happen at any time to grow
to some meane state, by and by it is either
oppressed with the violence of Tyrantes,
or it decayeth of the owne accorde: so that
it continueth but a very small time. Her-
upon it commeth to passe, that in all ages
proude men did either despise, or flaunde-
rously misrepozte the true Religion. We
see howe arrogantly Cicero taunteth the
lawe of God, bicause the Jewes had so
ill successe. By this one man ye may giue
iudgement at all. And to the intent I
digresse not to farre, what is the cause
that many at this day abhorre the sincere
profession of the Gospell: but that they see
vs to be fewe in number, and of small au-
thoritie,

Antichriste, and of no power at all: where-
as they wonder to see all thinges con-
trarie on the behalfe of our aduersaries.
And surely as the worlde goeth nowe
a daies, it is no maruell though the state
of the Church beynge so misordred as
it is, doo feare them awaye: and that
the gloriousnesse that shyneth in our ad-
uersaries doo dazle theyr eyes. But
none other doo stumble at this Stone,
neyther dothe this stumblyng blocke
keepe any backe, sauing suche as acknow-
ledge not the kingedome of Christe to
be Spirituall. For suche vnto whome
neyther the stable wherein Christe was
borne, nor the Crosse whereon he hunge,
is a lette to worshippe him as their
Kinge: they shall neuer despise the low-
ly state of his Church. All menne con-
fesse in worde, and of necessitie muste
confesse, that it is moste agreable to rea-
son, that in the forme of the Church,
as it were in a Glasse, shoulde appeare
the liuelie Image of Christe,
And when Paule reasoneth of the simili-
tude of the head and the members in the
sufferance of the Crosse, all men agree
thereto,

therto. When he saith we muste all die
with Christe, that we may be partakers
of his life, no man speaketh against him.
When all the whole Scripture compa-
reth this present life to a warrefare, and
teacheth that it is full of diuers sortes of
conflictes, they consente that all this is
trewe and right: and therefore the name
of the Militant Church is so commonly
known, that ye shall heare it even in
childzens mouthes. But as soon as it cometh
to the pith of the matter, as though
they had forgotten all thinges, they shew
the image of Christe, as it were some
monster that they neuer heard of. How-
beit, if their longyng should be graunted
them, that the Church shoulde by all
meanes enioye prosperitie, that it shoulde
flourish in welth and power, that it shoulde
haue continuall peace, and finally that it
shoulde wante nothinge that might make
the state thereof most fortunate and hap-
pie, should it not appere to be an earthly
kingedome? And then the Spirituall
kingedome of Christe were to be sought
for els where. Or rather the Church
shoulde be vtterly separated from the head.

But

But let vs remember, that the outwarde
shewe of the Church is so contemptible,
to the intent her beautie should shine in-
wardely: & that it wauereth so on earth,
to the intent it shoulde haue a stedfaste
seate in Heauen: and that it lieth so forne
and ruinause befoze the world, to the en-
tent it shoulde stande sounde and flozithe
befoze God and his Angels: and that it is
so miserable in the fleshe, to the intent it
should the rather haue her felicitie layed
vp in the spirit. In this wise when Christ
laye despised in the Drestall; the Angels
songe his excellencie in the cloudes: the
Starre in Heauen bare witnessse of his
glozy: the wisemen perceiued his power
in a countrey farre of. When he hungred
in the desert, when he strone against the
illusions of the Deuill, when he sweate
droppes of bloud, the Angels agayne did
minister vnto him: when he was now
readie to be bounde, he compelled his e-
nemies to fall backward with the only
worde of his mouthe. When he hunge
vppon the Crosse, the Sunne by losinge
his lighte, shewed openly that he was
Kinge of the worlde. The sepulchers ope-
ninge,

ninge, confessed him to be Lorde of life and death. Nowe if we see Christe throughte the despihtes of the wicked, proudely dealte with all in his bodie, oppressed with cruell Tyrannie, made a laughynge stocke, drawen violently hither and thither, none of these thinges as vnaccustomed ought to abashe vs: but rather we ought to call to minde, that the Church was ordeined for this purpose, that it should continually goe a warfare vnder the Crosse, as long as it wandereth in this worlde.

But if we were handsome and indifferente interpreters of the workes of God, the thinge wherewith we take occasion to be offended, shoulde be the beste comfort for vs that coulde be. For wher as the state of the Church is for the most parte miserable, and alwayes vnstable, or rather for asmuche as it is continually tossed with diuers stormes as it were in a roughe sea: firste the Lorde giueth an euident token of his wonderfull prouidence: and secondely it is a profitable and as muche necessarie exercise, for the triall of our faith and patience. If the
Church

Church were so founded, and altogether fortified, that it might stape vppon the owne power, it shoulde differ nothinge from an earthly kingedome: neither would any man doubt that it were gouerned by mans pollicie, if it had stode all at one ordinarie stay vnto this daye. But whē we see that throught(as it were) innumerable deathes, it hath neuertheless continued alīue so many hundred yēeres, it can none otherwise be, but we muste needes gather, that it was preserved by the power of God. This greates power of God, other circumstances doe make moze manifeste: in that when it was assaulted on all sides with deadly daungers, wherewith oftentimes it might haue bene ouerwhelmed, mangre wellnēre the whole worlde whiche wrought the worst it coulde againste it, it alwaies scaped as it had bene from shipwrecke. I say nothinge herein whiche any manne may not easely acknowledge in him selfe, who so euer will sette before his eyes the Histories of all times. This is an olde cōplainte of the Church, that it hath bene assaulted oftentimes
from

from her youth vp, and hath had the vni-
godly her vtter enemies: that they haue
ploughed vppon her backe, and drawen
longe furrowes vpon her. By this voice,
the spirit of God would rayse vp the god-
ly sorte, that lie gronyng vnder moste
grenous miseries, to the entent that rui-
ninge through all degræes of ages from
the beginnyng of the worlde, thei should
know that the Church hath alwayes o-
uercome by sufferance. Heruppon ought
we to set our mindes continually: to the
entet that if at any time the present state
of our time doe trouble vs, the remem-
braunce of those thinges whiche our fa-
thers haue suffered in time past, may re-
fresh vs. And therefore it shalbe expedi-
ent, to haue a description of all times ga-
thered togither, to the entent that every
one of vs may from thence set before our
eyes, examplis meete to asswage our mi-
series, as often as the case and neede shall
require.

Notobest ere I proceede any further,
it is needefull to note wherupon so many
and so sundrie chaunges whereby the
Church of God is oftentimes turned and

as it were wheeled about, do arise. The knowledge of this thinge is not to be fetched from farre & obscure coniectures, seinge the continuall starting of men frō God, hath broken the course of his grace, whiche otherwise had bene continuall: whiche thing ye may vnderstande almost from the beginnyng of the world. When Moyses speaketh of Seth and his sonne Enos, it is there recited that at the same time, the name of God was begonne to be called vpon. Whereby we vnderstāde, that the true worshipping of God, (which in the cursed offspringe of Cain was in maner vtterly decayed) was restored anew againe, that it might thriue & flourish in the world. Scarce eight generations passed, when all the posteritie of them whom God had segregated to himself for his owne children, had throwen themselves in such wise into all kinde of wickednesse, that with themselves they destroyed by flood of water, all the whole world defiled with their abominations. At such time as the Church was brought to eight persones, it seemed then at least, wise so purged, that y^e little sēde whiche

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remain

John Caluine concerninge

remayned , should of it selfe bzing forth
nothinge but pure holinesse . And yet
anon after , it diminished almoste by the
fourthe parte . The posteritie of Iaphet
also , within a while after flæted awaye.
There remained no more but the house
holde of Sem , the whiche it selfe ere it
was any longe time , grewe out of kinde
also: so that God did worthely exclude frõ
him a greate parte of it . When the Os-
springe of Abraham, beyng by wonder-
ful power brought out of Egypt, had pas-
sed the redde Sea , and was goynge to-
warde the lande of Promisse, who would
not of luckie beginnings haue iudged
that there shoulde haue enswed a conti-
nuance of a happie state : Notwithstan-
dinge , euen the very same , in whose de-
liuerance God had shewed so manifest a
prouse of his power, made no ende of sin-
ninge , untill suche time as by horrible
meanes , they were all destroyed in the
wildernesse . At length the children of
them toke possession of the said lande: but
yet suche a possession , as welnære in fye
hundred yæres after , had no stabilitie,
bicause they themselues throughe their
owne

of the falsenelle and vncōstancie, did est-
 soones trouble it. Neuerthelesse the Lord
 did diuers times restore them to a tolle-
 rable order. All the which notwithstanding,
 neither the remembrance of their
 first deliuerance, nor the rodde that was
 laide vpon them, so oftentimes to chasten
 them, nor the present feelinge of punish-
 ments, nor the often pardoning of them,
 could keepe them in awe, but that by the
 kinge of the yoke of God, they procured
 newe mischieses to themselves. Moyses
 had tolde them before how it would come
 to passe, that when they were fatte and
 well fedde, they would kicke againe: but
 the thing in dede was farre worse. What
 doth the storie of the Judges reherse, but
 continuall backslidings: Wherefore if
 any be offended at the sundry shakings,
 wherunto they see the Church subiect in
 this worlde, let them caste their eyes vpon
 that Glasse, and they shall leaue wo-
 deringe to see them haue vncertayne ab-
 dyngge vpon Earthe, who with so great
 vncōstantnesse of faith doe wauer be-
 fore God. After that the Kingedome of
 Dauid was erected, there seemed a more

certaine & grounded kinde of a state like
to continue, to haue bene stablished.
But that lamentable slaughter of the Pe-
ssilence, which by the space of thre daies
after a monstrous maner raged in the
wozrde, abated greatly that felicitie. By
and by after the death of Salomon, the
bodie of the Realme was deuided, and
the tozrne members ceased not after ward
to byte one another. And mozeouer both
Kingdomes were miserably turmoyled
by foraine warres. Shall we say their
deskenie draue them thereunto? Nay ra-
ther they theselues through their sinnes
enforced and hastened the vengeance of
God. For euen wherein they seemed
most innocent, namely whyle David go-
eth through with numberynge of them,
bicause it was the peculiar faulte of one
man: yet the holy Historie saith plainly
that God was wrothe with them all.
At length followed that greate conuer-
sion little differinge from vtter destruc-
tion, when all the whole Nation was
led captiue to Babilon. But surely if
their owne desperate stubbornnesse had
not diuyn them hedlonges, they had ne-
uer

ther come to this point of miserie. Their
returne after threescore and tenne yeres,
was vnto them another birthe. Not
withstandinge, as soone as they were re-
turned home, streightwaies forgettinge
so greate a benefite, they degenerate a-
gaine into sundrie kindes of naughtines.
Some defiled themselues with Heathen
mariages: some (to vnworthely to speake
of) defrauded God of his tēthes and first
fruites. Other some settinge light, and
neglectyng the buildinge of the Temple,
were wholly occupied in makinge gaye
houses, & bestowed excessive costes there-
about. This was too foule an vnthank-
fulnesse, and suche a one as euery man
must confesse ought not to scape unpuni-
shed. And therfore, that they enioyed not
tranquillitie and prosperous fortune any
longe time togither, they themselues are
in the faulte. Nowe since the time that
Christe the authoz of peace and of all good
thinges shewed himselfe to the worlde,
men might assuredly haue felte how cer-
taine and well founded the felicitie of
his eternall Kingedome is, if they would
haue suffred him to reste amonge them.

Dij

But

Iohn Caluine concerninge

But the worlde was neuer shaken with
more cruell tepestes of warre, no: neuer
drownd in so manifold & deepe a sinke of
euils. The cause wherof is not hidde
such darkenesse, but that by searchyng it
may easely be foud out. At the time that
Christe was bozne, there was peace and
singular quietnesse euerywhere. Fortie
yeres after, or therabouts, his Gospell
was spzed thzough diuers coastes of the
worlde. After it was published farre and
neere, sodainly as though fortune had
chaunged her copie, thinges beganne to
be on a turmoile euerywhere. And wher-
of came so sodeine alteratiõ, but that God
for the contempt and refusall of his Go-
spell, how muche the sooner, so muche also
the more manifestly, reuenged so great
vnthankfulnesse. Therefore, when
lewde men charged the name of Christe
with whatsoener euill happened in those
daies, it was an easie matter for the gods
ly teachers of the Church, to disproue
their so tryflinge slaunders. And why
not? For when Kinges and their peo-
ple had despised the peace whiche God
offred them, was it not righte and rea-
son,

son, that they shoulde be sette together by the eares, that one of them mighte wounde another to the death: And what can continewe in order amonge them, who refuse to submitte themselves to God: I speake not onely of the open enemies, which haue wilfully strided against the wholesome doctrine of Godlinesse, but also of them that haue professed themselves Christians, howe coldly and disdainefully many of them, and with how false dissimulation other some haue kissed Christe. Suche as are offended at the examples of Gods seueritie in this behalfe, woulde be as readie to finde faulte with him, if he shoulde holde his hande. But onlesse it grieue vs to open our eyes, to whomsoever God at any time manifested himselfe, we shall see that they onely were the let that their own felicitie was not placed in faultie to endure a longe time and of great continuance: and that they became miserable through no other meanes, save their owne faulte. We knowe that Ierusalem was the Fountaine from whence Saluation flowed in to the vttermoste boundes of the Earth.

All the sayinges of the Prophetes had
promised to it full instauration at the co-
minge of Christe. Neuerthelesse it fell
out farre other wise. For whereas it re-
tained scarce a thinne shadow of the an-
cient worthinesse, it not onely within a
while after losse that that remained, but
was utterly caste downe also and made a
waste wilderness. What is the reason
that no man trauelleth in seekinge the
cause of so monstrous a ruine, but that
the desperate wickednesse of that nation,
bothe openly crie out that the same was
the cause thereof? Rome was neuer pla-
gued with so many cruel slaughters in so
shorte a time, as it hath bene since the
Gospell came thither. Howe came it to
passe that the kingedome of Christe could
haue no stedfast continuance in that
Citie, wherein the lawlesse luste of the
commonaltie had bozne swinge so longe
time? wherein wicked parttakings had
reigned? and at length also intollerable
Tirantes had bozne authoritie? Undoubt-
edly because that when God brought the
Medicine of his Gospell thither, as the vt-
termost remedie against so many deadly
diseases,

diseases, they like persones y had sworne
their owne destruction, proudly reiec-
tinge it, ceased not to fall from worse to
worse. The very selfe same thinge, we
may marke in this our age. Within these
fewe yeres when the Church beyng as
it were new borne againe, had had a glo-
rious beginninge, we sawe it soone after
slide downe and carried backe againe.
Howbeit before the Lorde laide this pu-
nishment vpon vs, we saw the Gospell
diuers and sundry waies euerywhere fil-
thely abused: in so muche that the sodaine
turninge vp of thinges that happened, is
not so greatly to be wondered at, as
Gods longe sufferance in bearinge with
the prodigious wickednesse of our time.
Amonge so many thousande men as to
outward appearance had very gladly de-
nied the Pope, and professed themselves
Gospellers: how fewe I beseeche you, fell
to amending of their vices? Nay ra-
ther what did the greater part pretende,
but that when the yoke of superstition
was shaken of, they might more licenti-
ously giue themselves to all carnall liber-
tie: Albeit therefore that they confessed

D b

the

the doctrine of the Gospell to be trew, yet where was there one amonge a number, that submitted his necke vnder the awe thereof? Was not this as muche in effecte, as to treade vnder foote the inestimable treasure of our Saluation? And surely the sharpnesse of the punishment that ensued so wicked a contempt, ought rather to put vs in remembraunce of the preciousnesse thereof, than to engendre in our mindes absurde opinions of the casuall afflictions of the Church. But rather it is to be wondered at, consideringe our so great vnthankfulnesse, that any parte of the worke remaineth which God hath begonne.

Now wil I returne to my purpose, from whence I haue by little and little made digression: That God is hereby better knowen to be the keeper of this Church, because it hath alwayes bene miserably bered, than if it had flourished amonge the greatest commodities, in peaceable ioye and tranquillitie. At suche time as the name of God was begonne to be called vpon in the householde of Seth, (as Moyses declareth) no doubt but the *De*
springe

springe of Cain, like as they were mo in
number and bolder in al mischief, so also
they vaunted themselves ouer proude-
ly against them, beinge both few and giuen
to meekenesse. How then could the La-
bes haue any while continued saule amonge
the Woulues, if they had not bene shiel-
ded with the helpinge hande of God? Af-
terwarde also, continually from time to
time, as the wicked sort grew in malice,
so grew they in power & abilitie to hurte:
shall we say they stode by mans power &
politic, who liued like persons ouerwhel-
med amöge so many outragious beastes?
Onlesse peraduenture any man will sur-
mise, that the Giantes were of modestie
restrained frö doinge harme to the godly
that were in their daunger, of whome
they knewe themselves abhorred, as an
adulterous offsprig. At length remained
but one man with a smal household, who
beyng comaunded by the Lorde to bulde
the Arke, by the space of a hundzed and
twetie yeres together, prouoked against
himselke the ragynge madnesse of them,
that were altogether out of their wittes
against God. For in seekyng a new kinde
of

John Caluine concerninge

of Sanctuarie to saue his owne life, he
threated destruction openly to them all.
How often (may we thinke) that he, be-
ynge prouoked with their raylinge and
lewde behauiour, did earnestly stande in
contention with them on the behalfe of
Goddes rightuousnesse: nowe in suche a
number of cruell enemies, muste he not
haue stande to the hazarde of as many
deathes, onlesse he had bene deliuered by
the hande of God: Kecken hereunto that
if he had not bene sustained by the power
of God, he had of himselfe a thousande
times euery yere come to nothinge.
Afterwarde ensueth a greater and moze
heauierly miracle in the Arke, that being
deprived of skie and ayre, he founde lyfe
no where but as it were in the graue: he
had not where to draw the breath of life,
but where it was vnlike but he should be
stilled to death: and finally that he coulde
not otherwise abide in the worlde aliue,
except he departed out of the worlde.
When God had after a sort renewed the
worlde, nowe putting by the head out of
the floud, there followed within a while
after a greater and moze noysome floud
of

of vngodlinesse, which ouerwhelmed all
Nations. Neither was this of tenne mo-
nethes: but raginge a longe continuance
of yeres, it gathered such strength, that
the very household of Sem the holy trea-
surehouse of God, had like to haue bene
swallowed vp, but that Melchisedecke
with a fewe other retayninge the pure
worshippinge of God, stood vpzighte
and not disceaued amonge innumerable
waues: whiche was the onely waye for
him to swimme to lande. God to the
entent to saue Abraham, was fayne to
leade him out of the deepe whorlepole
of Idolatrie. Moreouer beinge brought
into the lande whiche was appointed for
his inheritance, he so wandzed in it, that
one whyle he was driuen to make cōten-
tion for water, and another while he was
faine to remoue otherwhere for the fa-
mine. In the Courtes of two Kinges, he
could finde none other shift to auoide the
daunger of death, than by settinge as it
were to the spoile, his owne wife more
deare to him than his life. The same, and
also more sharpe troubles, did his Sonne
and his Sonnes Sonne endure daylye
amor:ge

John Caluine concerninge

amonge cruell and sauage people, as it
were among wilde beastes, not without
perill of their liues. Certainly he muste
be worse than starke blinde, that dothe
not plainly beholde the hande of God, in
the defence of their welfare. And it is not
without cause, that Dauid giueth a sin-
gular commendation to this ayde of God,
whereby they were in saulsgarde: when
he saithe, that Kinges were forbidden to
hurte the Lordes anoynted, or to trouble
his Prophetes. They were few in nūber:
they were aliantes and vnknown men:
they wandred like Pilgrimes from place
to place, they were enuironed rounde a-
bout with falseharted and outrageous
people: they had no moment of time free
from some newe kinde of daunger. I
confesse this was a disdainfull sight for
prowde men, and almoste shamefull to.
How be it as I saide before, In this dis-
dainefulnesse as it had bene in a Glasse,
did better appeare Goddes extraordina-
rie defendinge his Church. Yea rather
it is more evidently to be seene, that the
Church hath not bene saued out of one
floudde onely, but that it hath also ne-
uerthelesse

uerthelesse continued many ages, floating
from time to time in continuall waues
of euilles.

Anon after followed the bondage in
Egypt, whiche had smally differed from
an vniuersall shipwrecke, but that God
put to his helpinge hande in time. I
will omitte the reproche & ouer grieuous
burdens that were layed vppon them, in
that they were kepte like slaues to moste
vile and filthie workes: and that they
were oppressed with suche excessive mis-
eries, that they had muche adoe to take
breathe. But when Pharaos had commaun-
ded all y^e issue male to be vtterly destroy-
ed, who would not haue saide that y^e mat-
ter lay a bléding: The Midwives lied, to
the entet they would not become furthe-
rers of the kinges crueltie. Finally Moy-
ses himself who afterwarde should be the
deliuerer of y^e people, was put in a wicker
basket, and cast at the banke of the riuer.
The welfare of the whole Nation lay in
despayre, and the very name of them sé-
med to be vtterly blotted out. Howe
wonderfull then shall we iudge this mi-
racle of God, that they which might haue
bene

bene tennē times consumed, do not only
remainē saulfe, but also do accomplishe
those incredible proceedings wherof Moyses
maketh report. But here the lewdnes
of man sheweth it selfe to malicious, in
regardingē the workes of God. For if
they heare of any thing greater than thei
can conceiue, done by God for the helpe
of his Church, they reiect it as a Fable.
What so euer is common and other wise
customable, they despise it, affirminge it
either to haue happened by chaunce, or at
leastwise to haue bene brought to passe
by mans power and pollicie. If the state
of the Church be lesse prosperous & ioy-
full than they looke for, by & by they take
occasio thereat to be offended. And there-
fore bicause Moyses reporteth that the
græuous and slauiſh worke of brickema-
kinge was laide vpon the wretched Iewes
as it had bene vpon brute beastes: that
their issue male was from the mothers
wombe deliuered, cruelly called for to be
slaine to death: that thei fledde priuely a-
way by heapes out of order with Iewels
that they had borrowed, like a sorte of
rascalles: all this seemeth vnto many an
vncomly

Uncomely thyng and against the honour
of the Church. Yea whereas he reporteth
Jacob and his householde to haue bene
courteously entertained of Pharaos, and
that he was gently bled, and placed in
the best pasture countrie, they impute it
wholy to good fortune, whereas the same
one householde is saide to haue growen
to a greate people ere it was any longe
time after: whereas the same Moyses de-
clareth, that so many Miracles were
wrought by God, for the deliuerance of
the outcaste and forlorne Israelites: be-
cause it was moze than coulde be beleued
they scoffe at it as a feigned thinge. To
the entent therefore we may bringe pure
mindes to the consideringe of Goddes
woorkes, we muste firste purge them of
this leudnesse bozne and bredde in them
of Nature.

Least I may seeme to frame an histo-
rie, (which is no parte of my present pur-
pose) it suffiseth me lightly, & as it were
by the way to touch the examples of Gods
providence in preseruinge his Church,
whiche are worthe to be decked and set
out with glorious enditinge. Albeit (to
say

John Caluine concerninge

saye the trueth) the order of this worke,
suffereth me not to touche the tenth
parte of them, neyther is it a matter so
greatly requisite: so be it that the Rea-
ders maye by these fewe knowe this one
thinge whiche I intende: namely that
howe muche the Church was more op-
pressed vnder the Crosse, so muche the
more notable was the power of God in
liftinge it vp. From the first enteringe
of the people into the lande of Chanaan,
their owne vnbeliefe was the onely let
why they possessed it not free from ene-
mies and in quietnesse. Afterwarde it
was assaulted with continuall inuasions
of enemies. Furthermore, when their
power was decayed and brought vnder
foote, it laye open to the spoyle and to be
wasted. Moreouer it oftentimes chaun-
ged maisters, whiche neuerthelesse con-
spired all in one, who might make mosse
haucke of it. In so muche that it maye
be a wonder how in so many and so cruel
destructions hanginge over it, it remai-
ned vnderstroyed. Surely after the Arke
of the Lords was taken, there was not
an inche breath betwene it and vtter de-
spaire:

spayre: it was scorged with an exceeding
greate slaughter: almoste all the flowre
of their manhood perished: beyng scatter
ed and disperled, they minded nothinge
in the worlde but weeping and lamen
tinge. Howbeit, while, for the grieuous
nesse of their euilles, they sought not
any remedie, firste was giuen them a
little breathinge time: afterwarde vpon
the sodaine beyonde all hope or expecta
tion, helpe shone vpon them from Hea
uen. At suche time as Saule was slaine,
the like destructio hōge over their heads,
when Dauid in the twinklinge of an eye
restored thinges decayed. If continuall
successe of peace and prosperitie had fol
lowed them, the rare felicitie of that
people mighte haue bene sette out with
greater commendations, but so many
helpes which God wonderfullly sent thē,
coule not so well haue bene knowen.
Afterward when tenne Tribes had rent
themselues from the bodie, such a breake,
specially amonge many enemies lyinge
continually in the winde, to hurte them
whensoeuer occasion serued, seemed to
threaten present destruction. Anon after
E g the

John Caluine concerninge

the Israelites degenerated into strange
customs, and for the same cause they
were after a sorte banished from the house-
holde of God: as for the remnant whiche
is counted the Church of God, no man
woulde thinke it shoulde stande longe.
And surely that people was oftentimes
brought to such an afterdeale, that beyng
past all hope of recouerie, it stode in a
maze lookinge for vtter destruction. In
the time of Achaz when two moste pu-
sant Kinges assayed euen Hierusalem it
selte, all the Countrey was turmoyled,
as it had bene burninge with two fires
at ones. Achaz beyng beside himselfe
for feare, was like enough to haue bene
confounded at the first assault of his ene-
mies. But sodeinly without mans helpe
that greate fire was quenched and the
smoke alayed. Did not (thinke you) the
glozy of God shew it selte with full blaze
in this deliuerance? At what time Sen-
nacherib had inuaded the kingdome de-
stitute of defence, he furiously set vpon
the fearfull Citie, nothinge furnished to
make resistance: Ezechias the Kinge was
in maner like a prysoner, there was no
way

way to escape out, there was no helpe within, there was no succour to come from els where: now, while the enemye boasting himselfe ouer arrogantly is drawne another way, dothe not this so sodeine alteration contrary to all hope, shewe that it is true whiche was spoken before by the Prophet Esay: that God had in a readinesse a waye eyther to tame that cruell beast, or to holde him shorthe: But wheras anon after puffed by with a new victorie he returneth againe, the Lorde sheweth another manner of prouise than this of his grace and power in raylinge the siege. For he calleth him not from thence by men, either withstandeth his assaultes, and cutteth of his attemptes in the middes by ordinarie meanes: But with suche a slaughter as neuer was hearde of by the hande of an Angell, takinge his army from him in one night, he driueth him naked & despoyled by shame, full flight farre out of Ieruzie, whiche he helde with a great Hoste like a conquerour: Assuredly this one dede is a sufficient example, that nothyng sometime is moze expedient, than that the Church

John Caluine concerninge

should be pinched with vtter distresse, & it may learne to thanke the wonderfull power of God for her saulſe deliuerance. And double vnthankfull were we, if we put a beyle wilfully befoze our faces, to blemish the sight of Gods fauour toward his Church, whē as God himselfe setteth a cleere mirror thereof befoze our eyes.

How there cannot almost any defozmitie of the Churche be sained so vgly to the sight of the worlde, as the banishment of Babilon. The cruell sackynge of all thinges, the soule destroying & wastinge of the Countrey, the castinge downe and defacinge of the Citie by fire and furie of the enemye, the horrible ouerthrow of the Temple, the vnworthie spoylinge of the holy furniture thereof, how great libertie of vauntinge might they giue to the enemies? And the thinges that I haue now reckened, doe shewe how arrogantly the Chaldies behaued themselves. By all likelihode the worshippinge of God was euerywhere rayled and scoffed at in all mens mouthes. Howbeit these thinges were but as certaine preparatiues. The people beyng ledde to Babilon, was like

like a dead carkeſſe as it were laiſde into the graue: ſauinge that this difference there was, that the tozne members were ſcattered aſunder, leaſte they ſhoulde growe together agayne. There was no houſe of God any moze, there was no Sanctuarie, no inkinge of Goddes ſeruiſe, no ſolemne aſſemblies, no noz ſo muche as the name of a Church. And to the entent there ſhoulde wante no ſpight that might be deuised, the holy beſſelles were ſet out for a ſhow in their proude and vnpure feaſtes. Pea and the crueltie was ſo outragious, that it became treaſon to call vppon God. But this ſo exceſſiue heapinge togiſther of all miſchiefes, maketh the power of God to appeere moze maniſeſt in reſtoringe the welfare of his people. Firſt of all, in that Daniell and his ſelo'wes were from bondage aduanced to ſuch preheminēce, as hath ſeldome bene ſeene, ſo the entet they might ſomewhat relieue their miſerable oppreſſed brethzen: It is by this example apparant, y the Church euen when it ſeemeth vtterly abandoned, is neuertheleſſe cared for of God. In y the thre holy men

John Caluine concerninge

whiche were cast into the fornaice, scaped
saule and sounde againe out ; there ap-
peared a token very woꝛthie to be had in
remembraunce , of the deliuerance of the
people, which shortly after should ensue,
As for the returninge it selfe of the peo-
ple , it was no lesse to be wondered at,
than a certaine rising agayne from death
whiche had neuer bene hearde of : so that
the faithfull might iustely boaste in the
Psalme, how they were at that time like
men in a dreame . Nowe, in that saule-
conduct is giuen by the Kinge , that the
Temple is builded againe at the Kinges
coste, that men were forbidden to do the
Iewes wronge by proclamacions vnder
griuous penalties , we may be ashamed
not to acknowledge God the authour of
these thinges , seinge they were miracles
to so many unbeleuers . It is not to be
saide how much the consideration hereof
may auaille to the furtherance & encrease
of our Faith . Wherby is conuincéd the
vnthankfulnesse of them, that in so well
ordered a Theatre of the glorie of God,
do make to theselues a stumblingblocke
to pitch vpon, Noz eouer at their returne
into

into their countrie, sodainely they were increased by wonderfull meanes, as wel in number of menne as also in Riches.

This also is no obscure miracle of Gods power, specially forasmuch as their enemies gaue them no respite to recouer.

For we knowe they were besegged with so many enemylike hostes, as there were nations borderinge rounde about them.

But to the entent that vnder the Crosse the extraordinary defence of God might shine the brightest, within a while after they were so troden vnderfote and forwozne with continuall mischieues one in anothers necke, that their bitter destruction was apparant. Under the Emperre of the Persians, albeit y^e their state was tollerable, yet notwithstandinge like sheepe appoynted to the slaughter, they were now and then at the pointe to goe to the shambles. Least Alexander should powze out his outrageous wrath vppon them, he was restrayned by warninge from Heauen. But when he was dead, & the Kinges of Syrie and Egypte, like savage beastes burnyng in madnesse tare one another a piéces, and that there

was no end of their outrage and crueltie
one against another, who would haue
hoped y a nation lying in the middes be-
twene them, & set open to the lust of them
both, should haue continued longe: And
surely it coulde not haue stande, beyng
brought vnderfote with so many and so
great mischaüces, onlesse it had had God
to keepe it, & had bene stayed by with his
hand. At length vnder the cursed tiranie
of Antiochus, beyng as it were drowned
into a deepe whozlepole, it had not so
much as a sparckle more of lighte in al the
whole world. All y countrey swimmied in
innocent blond: Hierusale was couered
w horrible heapes of Carckesses, as it had
bene with pauement: In the temple was
placed an abhominable Idoll: The ordi-
nances of God beyng abolished, y Heathenish
& vnkindely ceremonies & customes
of the Gētiles vsurped the Soueraintie:
al the holy bookes were thzowen into the
fire, to y intent y the truth of God should
vtterly passe out of the remembraunce of
men. Who durste ones open his lippes:
Say, whosoener did but sigh for sorow,
and not rather defile himself with traitte-
rous

rous dissimulation, he was forthwith
drawn to the Butcherie. The Machabees
with a handfull y they had gathered to-
gether of themselves, lurked in caues of
mountaines, wanderyng in penury amog
the wilde beastes. Notwithstandyng, in
y in so great an afterdeale, there remay-
ned yet a remnant of godly men whiche
should afterwarde come abroade againe,
who can say but that thei were preserved
by the wonderfull prouidence of God. In
that the bookes of Moyses & the Prophets
escaped unhurte out of those flames, who
can impute it to mans keepinge? Finally
the Historie of those times dothe muche
more certainly testifie vnto vs the pro-
uidence of God in defendinge his Church,
than if he had gloriously & stoutely triu-
phed ouer all people in the world. Other
turmoiles also that happened afterward,
do set the same thinge before our eyes to
beholde. For although that euen to the
comminge of Christe, sometime by out-
ward warres, sometime by inwarde dis-
corde, and sometime by the wickednesse
of Barbarous Princes, the Jewes were
continually vered and racked as it had
bene

bene vppon a wheele: Yet notwithstandinge it came to passe thzough the singular benefite of God, that the Church held her owne still amonge these troublous turninges. Here may come to our remembrance so many holy men, yea and women, who were fayne to swallow vp the vnworthie miseries that I haue reckoned. Some that liued till they were very olde, were driuen of necessitie to trace the longe and manifolde mazes of euils, and at the laste to die sorowfully, when they sawe no ende of them. Surely these were stumblingblockes that mighte put them out of the right race, and yet traueling thzough by faith, they followed constantly their vocation. Nowe therefore ought their hartie courage to be vnto vs not onely as a wagon to ease vs of our wearinesse, but also in steede of winges wherewith wee maye flie ouer the highe rookes, and the busshie and combersome wooddes, and also all other steepe & rough places. And the ioyfull fallinge out of these thinges, which are witnesses to vs of Gods faithfull carefulnesse in preseruinge his Church, if they take not from

Offences.

By all sence of offendinge, we are more
nice and squeymish than we ought to be.
For rather this kinde of lothinge is not
tollerable, if in y^e plaine path we through
our owne leude imagination, doe caste
stumblingblockes in our way.

But if in his olde people the misfor-
tunes and calamities of the Church had
alwaies this goodnesse in them, to bringe
the helpe of God out of hand with them,
and the greivousyer they were pressed
with the Crosse, so muche the more eu-
dently God shewed that the Church was
raised by his hande, and upheld when it
was rayled: we may much more plainely
see the same vnder the reigne of Christe.
If the Church through continuall suc-
cesse in peace had enjoyed a flourishinge
and pleasant state, since the Gospell be-
ganne to be published to the worlde, un-
doubtedly this had bene an vsuall order
after the maner of man, whiche all men
would haue passed over in disdainne: But
seynge that against so small and contem-
ned a handfull, by and by boyled out the
hatred of all nations and al states: seying
the name of a Christian was of lōge time
enery

Iohn Caluine concerninge

euerywhere so hated and detested, that
euery minute of an houre it was in all
places at the point of destruction: seynge
crueltie was euery where by sundrie
meanes executed against al them þ̄ durst
giue neuer so light & slender an inclinge
of Christianitie: seynge the whole worlde
conspired to put out the remembrance of
them fro the earth: and that the Church
neuerthelesse after a sorte continued fro
time to time: here doth appere a certaine
vnwonted power, and a certaine secreete
workinge, whiche cannot be expessed.
This I saye: when the dennes of wilde
beastes in forrestes and mountaines were
Christian mennes Churches: when they
coude no where dwell in saulftie, and
that they were vtterly slaüdered and ha-
ted of all men: who would not haue bene
afraide to haue professed the Gospell, ex-
cepte he had bene stirred thereto by the
spirite of God: And yet from time to
time, many, euen with strife of set pur-
pose to take vppon them suche dispight,
flocked willingly into that miserable &
slauische feare. As soone as any one had
professed Christ, he was not onely caught
to

to be put to death, but cruell tormentes were also sette befoze him: there was no pitie of sex, there was no pitie of age. Was it not moze than wonderfull, that any were found, whiche would be Christians of the price? As soone as any one was taken, he was streightly examined if he had any fellowes. If at any time whyle he was in tormentes the partie that had with others conspired the death of the Tyranne, helde his peace, because he would not betraye his fellowes, all menne wondered at his constancie. In so many prouinces, in so many Cities, do not the innumerable examples of keepinge promise to the vttermoste, witnesseth that their tongues were gouerned by God? And whereas in euery man seuerally, yea and oftentimes in weake women too, the whole welfare of the Church laye in leoperdie, surely therein was a notable Miracle, that all had not within a while bene vtterly rooted out. And yet amonge so many abatementes, not muche vnlike to destructions, it ceased not algaies to spreade further. And that was truely to triumphe
vnder

nder the flaunder of the Crosse. Wee rather he that shall wey all circumstances indifferently as he ought to do, shall confesse that amonge innumerable deathes, there was a continuall race of many resurrections. That thinge whiche for the difficultnesse thereof might seeme incredible to vs, if any man would tell vs that the like shoulde happen hereafter: Now when the same is come to passe, not onely to despise it, but also to count it a thinge to be offended at, is not a point of wisdom, but of a malicious wilfulnesse. Those were in dede the moste violent brutes, howbeit, other ages also were not exempted from the same warfare of the Crosse, but that they tasted of harder encounters, whiche woulde at that time serue God sincerely and faithfully. The Romaine Emperre had submitted it selfe to the kingdome of Christe. The Church might seeme to be placed in a happie seate of quietnesse and glorie. The barbarous nations also had yelded to the profession of Christe. But in the meane while, Heretiques and vnbeleuinge men helde the Soueraintie, in so much that good & true
theye

Shepherdes beinge chased by violence (e
not without reproch) frō their Churches,
liued like banished persones in vnknowē
cōtreis: Yea and they had not bene suf
fered to haue liued in exile, had they not
hidden themselves from the Tirannie of
their enemies. In that the Church hath
often bene left to the violence of so cruell
persecutions, in that it hath lien wel
nere ouerthrowen to be trode vnder fote
of the enemies, this is farre from any
likelihoode of worldly dignitie. But in
that a small number of the Godly, with
inuisible constancie of faith, hath over
come so great waues of persecutiōs, that
the Church hath out stode all the Ty
rannes and Heretikes and lefte vnto po
steritie the true doctrine of the faith: this
is surely a plaine witnesse of the power
of God, which excelleth all the glories of
the worlde. So in the present calamitie
of the Church, there shineth no suche di
gnitie as may represent to mennes eyes
the heauenly kingedome of God: For the
vtterest enemies therof oppressinge it in
very deede, and yet garnishinge them
selues with the title of it as it were with

Iohn Caluine concerninge

a spoile, doe no lesse cruelly than proude-
ly treade it vnder foote. If any man dare be
so bolde neuer so little to stirre againste
their wickednesse, by and by like terrible
tormentours, with fire, sword, and all
kinde of tormentes they goe nie to chace
the true Church out of the Earth. And if
it chaunce to finde any lurking holes,
some while it is so assaulted with force of
armes, another while so bered with re-
proches, & another while so tossed & tur-
moiled with threatninges, and dreadfull
attempts: y it representeth nothyng lesse
than that kinglike beantie of Christe so
greatly comended of the Prophetes. But
scinge that by this their dreadfull threat-
ninge, & outrageous cruell dealinge, the
vngodly cannot so much preuaile, but that
the Church of God vnder the lowlinesse
of the Crosse standeth stedfastly vpright:
why doe we not in this wonderfull preser-
uatio of God, willingly embrace his glo-
rie? If any skilfull man woulde consider
with himself, how many things the wic-
ked sort haue practised these thirtie yeres
together, to destroy it, he shal be copelled
to wonder y it was not a hundred times
utterly

utterly destroyed. And now, whereas with
in these two peeres it hath bene pitifully
rent, & the tozne pietes therof are yet al-
most in the Lids mouth, although it brea-
keth the hartes of many, yet the faithfull
shall in the ende perceiue, that God doth
it to a right good purpose, to the entet he
may stretch out his hãde more manifest-
ly in deliueying it. For we are not wont
to acknowledge it to be preserved by him
vnlesse he deliuer it out of very death.

Lastly to the furtherance hereof also
maketh another reason, namely y it is a
thyng more than necessarie, that wilder-
nesse should be tamed and subdued by the
discipline of the Crosse. We see howe the
Churche, which in the middes of persecu-
tion had flourished with spirituall chere-
fulnesse, hath through to ioyfull quiet-
nesse growen out of order. At this daye,
when the Lorde reyneth vs in with a
harde and rough bit, we see how all mē in
all places almoste doe ware wanton, and
what would they doe then if they had frẽ-
scopes to rñe at rouers? when the profes-
sion of the Gospell reigned farre & nere
in Germanie, and that as yet the power

Iohn Caluine concerninge

was vnappalled of such as seemed stout
in defence of the good cause, and that vpon
confidence therof this lamentable warre
was taken in hande, whiche fell out vn-
luckely in the ende: at suche time as the
hartes of our part were encouraged with
great hope, I saide vppon a time openly,
that there was more daunger for vs in
our owne victorie, than in the victorie of
our enemies. For there was no misfor-
tune so greatly to be feared, as y^e Gospell
to much triumphat (if I may so terme it)
whiche might puffed vs vp with pryde.
Neither doth it repent me of this saying
to this daye. For if the Lorde had not in
time preuented that Heathenish libertie,
in processe of time the maladie woulde
haue bene almost incurable. Godly do-
ctrine and wholesome admonishmentes
should haue bene nothinge set by. Suche
as coulde not abide to admitt any meane
discipline, would like unruly beasts with
violent rage haue broken all yoke. So
great a blotte of slander could not haue
bene wiped fro the Gospell, vnlesse they
had bene compelled by force and afflictio
to a modestie of liuing, which heretofore
they

they would not learne of their owne accorde. Againe in this balace God shewed how enery man was minded. All men vaunted theselues gloriously vnder shadowe of the Gospell. Wicked Hipocrites bare most swinge in many places. But after that this foyle was taken, many Princes of greate name were by and by out of hart: the noblemen of the common welth (which was benommed with feare I cannot tell how,) quayled of their owne accorde. Here their ouer womanly feint-hartednesse, or rather traitourly cowardnesse, did openly betwray it self. We haue scene in one nation mo vngodly and wicked backeslidings from Christe, within two yeres space, than the histories of all times and all nations make mention of els where. How vnuincible the strength of faith is where the hartes are sustained by the vertue of the spirit, it is made manifest in others. The Heroicall haughtinesse of harte whiche the Lorde hath set forth to be scene of all ages in one man beyng vanquished and taken prisoner, woulde neuer haue bene beleued but by such triall of the Crosse. Certaine other

If it

notable

notable examples of the same sorte which
I coulde readely reherse, I passe ouer for
the nonce. But let euery man wey with
himselfe these and innumerable suche o-
thers. They saye that nowe women are
ledde vnto death, to the entent that not
onely me, but also whole peoples should
haue the iesse pardon, who for the gayne
of a small interest of transitorie peace
in the worlde, haue not sticke to denie
the Sonne of God the authoz of eternall
life, and to deprive themselues of his
heauenly kingedome. Finally, the Lord
himselfe knowes beste howe much those
things shall profite them, whiche nowe
are commonly counted for great euilles.
It is our duetie to take with steute cou-
rages what so euer calamities happen,
hoppnge for suche issue as is to be wis-
hed for at the Lordes hande: and al-
waies to grounde our selues vppon this
pointe, that how so euer the Church is
pressed for a time, our moste deare Fa-
ther whiche taketh singular care thereof,
will neuer suffer that it be overwhelmed
and decaye. If Christe muste beare rule
in the middes of his enemies, (as by
the

the witness of the holy Ghoste is testified longe agoe,) his kingedome cannot be amonge vs without a kinde of warfare and continuall strife. If we be like sheepe, appointed to the slaughter, and that our aduersaries burne in woodnesse like Wolves: Lette that precepte of the Lorde come to our remembraunce, that we muste possesse our soules in patience, vntill suche time as he may make perfect his strength in our weakenesse. Surely the Apostles were in no happier case, when they cried out boldlie, why do the Heathen so furiously rage, and why do the people imagine vaine thinges? We also if we vnderstande what that sayinge meaneth, to see God in Heauen, whensoever he giueth the vngodly bridle, we beinge furnished with the same confidence that the Apostles were, shall carelesly laugh all the worlde to scozne, although they were in harnessse.

There folloiw Offences which the common people beleue agayne to procede of the doctrine: but in very deede are the propre & naturall issue, eyther of lewdnesse, or of vnskilfulnes, or els of curiosnesse.

John Caluine concerninge

The Scripture teacheth vs in this wise of the corruption of our nature, that we bringe with vs a natie viciousnesse and malice from our mothers wombe: whereby it commeth to passe, that an euill tree cannot bring forth other than euill fruit, vntill we be newe grafted agayne by the grace of Christe. Here mans reason gathereth, that men theselues are not only faultlesse while they sinne, but also, that the faulte is iustly to be ascribed to God, who createth them suche, that they seeme to be borne to sinne. Let every man examine his owne conscience, and he shall out of hande holde his peace. For there we shall finde that whiche the Scripture so often testifieth, how that the leadenesse which cleaueth in vs, is the welspyring of all vices: and that we therfore committe all euilles, bicause we doe couet y^e whiche displeaseth God. How cometh it then to passe that they whome their owne conscience findeth guiltie within, doe busilie seeke here and there for vaine excuses to acquite themselves and others from the gylte: & not so content neither, doe make God also accessarie to their offence. If they

they were not minded to deceiue themselves wilfully to their owne destruction, would they not condemne the vice which they see in themselves, rather than laye the faulte thereof vppon another bodie? But goe to: for asmuch as they seeke after a sorte to haue some cloke (such as it is) to hide their blasphemies with, let vs shew them at one worde that they do shamelessly without any colour say euil. Shal he boast himselfe to be innocent, whome it is manifest to sinne with his good wil? When they haue saide all that they can, in the ende we come to this pointe, that nothinge is imputed vnto them of God, saue that whiche they do willingly. And what mā vnder the Sunne would quitte them in wilfull misdeedes. Now shall it not be free for God to condemne, that whiche men do lawfully condemne? But they stande in altercation with God, because he hath not giuen them a better minde & a vprighter hart: as who should say he had not giue them so at the beginninge. For the leadenesse that reigneth in vs; our learnynge imputeth not to Gods creation, but to the corruption of nature.

nature. They make exceptiō againe, that it is against equitie for them to suffer for another māns faulte. This exceptiō might peraduenture haue some colour, if they beyng frē from their owne sinne, could shewe that they were burdened with another mannes faulte. But seeinge they haue in such wise lost their rightuous nature in their first father Adam, that they are of their owne selues become sinfull, why do they complayne of wronge done vnto them, as if they were guiltlesse? Merely they do as ranke thēues are wont, who, while they are caried to punishment, do fall a railing and flandering the Iudge. And suche kinde of men cōmonly as they are readie to committe mischiefe: so also haue they their tongues at will in railing. But what winne they by their malapert railing in this wise? For neither is their owne shame made lesse thereby, nor the iudge any thinge stayned, and that they themselves knowe well enough, but that beinge blinded with despayre, they take a miserable comforte of a foolish reuengement. Hitherto I haue answered their blasphem

blasphemies whiche bewray their owne wickednesse openly. Howbeit as yet remaine the flanders of Sadolet, Bingham and such like, whereby they misreporte our doctrine, as though it brought with it diuers and almost infinite absurdities. If there rise thereof any Offence, it is bicause our writings are not perused, what shoulde I then do, but onely exhorste all those whiche beinge carried away with preposterous Offence, doe eschew the vnknowen truth, that they procure not to themselves a double punishment of their rashnesse. For they doe bothe defraude themselves of saluation offered vnto them: and besides that, they shall not scape unpunished for giuinge hastie iudgement with a lie, the cause beinge not hearde.

Nowe that Predestination is a sea of Offences, howe happeneth that: but onely by our owne, either curiousestie or malapertnesse: Here is meante of the secrete Iudgement of God, thorowe the brightnesse whereof, mennes mindes if they approche ouer nie, muste needes be not onely dazeled and dimmed,
but

but also vtterly swallowed vp. And yet
as much as our capacittie could beare, and
as much as was for our behoofe, our Lord
hath declared in his Scriptures: namely
that we are all forlorne, sauinge suche as
he chosinge from death hath redeemed to
life: and that the grace of Christe cometh
onely vnto them, who by free election be-
foze they were bozne, were predestinate
to saluation: and that others, like as they
be ordeyned befoze to euerlastinge dam-
natio, so also thei continue in their sinnes.
To procede any further if it were law-
full, yet were it not expedient. But now
seinge it were no lesse wicked than hurt-
full, to rushe thorough from whence the
Lorde keepeth vs, as it were by holdinge
ouer his owne hande: it were our duetie
to embrace reuerently that whiche the
Lorde deliuereth vs, & to holde our selues
contented therewithall, without making
any further inquisitiō. For the right rule
of beinge wise in this behalfe, is suche a
sobernesse as coueteth to knowe no more
than is reuealed in the Scriptures. Cer-
tainely God would that nothinge should
be hidde from vs, but such as the know-
ledge

Iudge thereof were superfluous, or more darke thā that our capacitie could attaine to the vnderstandinge of it. Wherefore we are the more vnthankfull, but if we temper our desire of searching, according to the meane which himselfe obserued in teachynge vs, why maruell we then, if they throwe themselues headlonge into the bottomlesse pitte, or dash themselues against the rockes, who after the maner of madmen rushe violently against God. They accuse God of crueltie, bicause he adiudgeth to damnation suche as are yet vnborne. But they shall one daye feele him a iuste iudge: or rather they feele him so already inwardly, although they acknowledge it not. They caill that preceptes are giuen in vayne concerninge maners, that lawes are made in vaine, and that iudgements are vniustly executed in punishinge euill doers, seing all thinges are ruled or rather rolled by destinies. As who should say God did not so gouerne his elect with his holy spirite, & glue ouer the castawales to be troubled by the Deuil, that he maketh the doctrine of Godlinesse and exhortations fruiteful vnto

Iohn Caluine concerninge

unto the one, and holdeth the other as
conuict of wilfulnesse and vnercusable,
bicause they obeyed not his warninge.
I omitte how little they profite by disfa-
minge the Prouidence of God with the
flaunderous name of destinie. For we nei-
ther dreame of intricate knottes of cau-
ses with the Stoikes, nor submit the go-
uernance of the worlde to the Starres,
nor imagine a necessitie of thinges in the
very nature of thinges it selfe. Howbeit
the same is it that Heathen men call fatal.
The predestination of God therefore is
far another thing than the Heathen desti-
nie, but let this brawlyng about wordes
cease in this case. If (say they) that neces-
sitie of thinges be prefixed by the eternal
decree of God, it is superfluous to teache
what euery mans duetie is. For teach-
inge shall alter nothyng of that which is
alreadie determined. But they ought to
haue considered by the way, that doctrine
was by God himself ordeined to this end,
that it should be an vnderseruaunt to his
secret determinations. Whome by his e-
ternal adoption he hath predestinated to
life, doth he not by doctrine as it were by
the

the hande stretched out, leade the thither
as he had predestinated the. For what els
is an effectual vocatiō, than an accōplish-
ment of the electiō which before was hid-
den. He may by sundrie threates compell
y reprobates (to no purpose as it semeth)
howbeit in asmuch as by this meanes he
maketh the vnercusable, herein also ap-
peareth some strength of y doctrine. For
wlish me perceiue not in how goodly order,
the woorkes of God agré amonge them-
selues. Herupon it cometh to passe, y thet
rashly set at variance with the will, the
doctrine which is nothing els thā the mi-
nister of his eternall will. Let vs learne
therfore that God speaketh not to me, to
thentent to reueale vnto the, or to correct
those things which he had determined w
himself lōg before, but rather y he might
teach them by triall, how firme & stedfast
they be. It cannot come to passe that they
should perish, whom he hath ones chosen
from the beginning: & bicause he will not
haue the perish, he comitteth them to the
trustie tuitiō of Christ. Moreouer to y en-
tent thei may haue Christ, to their shepe-
herd, it behoueth y they be gathered into
his

Iohn Caluine concerninge

his folde. Therfore when by giuyng eare to the voice of their shepeherde, the elect do attaine saluation, it is nothinge else but a bringyng of their election vnto his appointed ende, by the outwarde preachyng of the Gospell. He commaundeth the same doctrine also to be set befoze the reprobates: and why? is it to the entent to disanull that that he had determined of their damnation? Nay, rather that their wilful vnbeliefe should make moze apparant, what auaileth the grace of the secreete election? For what brighter mirror can there be made wherin this grace may clerely appeare, than when in the common doctrine, by the same callinge of God, by the like instrument of callinge, there is so great difference of men, that some obstinately refuse that, whiche othersome obediently embrace? Yet we see in the meane while, howe the worde whiche is spoken by the mouth of a man, although it amende not the hartes of the wicked, yet it strsketh their consciences, and restraineth their malapartnesse as it were a bzidle.

Now we must intreate of the Offences
whiche

whiche we haue assigned to the seconde
sorte. Many complaine that the Gospell
is the fountaine of discorde: bicause that
assone as it springeth vp, there bud out
debates with it: or rather as if a trum-
pet were blowen to some battell, men
arme themselves one against another. It
is surely to be confessed that Christe hath
pronounced, that debate and fightinge
should springe vp with the Gospell: but
it is to be weyed vpon what occasion it
cometh so to passe. First if men rise wil-
fully against God, when he goeth about
to bringe them to conformitie, we haue
tolde you befoze by what meanes that
happeneth. It is a harde matter that they
that stande to much vpon the reputation
of their owne wisdom, shoulde yelde
themselves willing to be taught of Christ.
But nowe when the lustes of the flesh,
whiche reigne in men are so many, and
like a sorte of fierce and vnculy beastes,
do we maruell if they make a trampling
and stirring agaynst the yoke and the
byddle? But it is to much wronge to lay
the blame of that euill vpon the Gospell,
the cause whereof is in our selues. They

doe euen as vprightly, who for feare of trouble and for hate of disorde, abhorre from the doctrine of peace. They thinke nothinge to be better than a quiet state: what then if some Tyrane should by his horrible and outragious crueltie obtaine thus much, that whiles he rauisheth maidens and honest wiues, whiles he spoyleth euery good mā of his goodes, whiles he murthereth the guiltlesse like a cut-throte, all men amazed for feare, shoulde holde their peace: shall tyrannie vnder this pretence deserue prayse? now if it be demaunded what maner of peace this is, whiche many sticke not to purchase with the losse of the Gospell: this surely shalbe the manifest truthe, namely to obteyne sinfull and peruerse Religions quietly & without stirre, bicause Sathan the worst of all Tyrannes, dothe without checke take his pleasure of mē halfe dead. Notwithstandinge as to the outwarde bondage of the bodie, peraduenture it were expedient rather to suffer sometime, than for the recovery of libertie, to make insurrection whiche maye burst out into slaughter and confused wastinge. But
when

When the matter toucheth the eternall destruction of the soule, nothinge ought to be so muche set by, that we shoulde either desire or wilfully embrace deadly peace. Moreouer hereby we defraude the sonne of God of his preheminence. But better it is that Heauen & Earth shoulde be confounded together, than that the honour whiche his father hath giuen him should be diminished, and much lesse then be taken quite awaye from him, and he made Iacke out of Office. Shall we then liue at debate with the prince of life, to the entent we may enioye peace amonge men: shall we make open warre against God, to the entent we would not be compelled to be at variance with naughty packes: shall we willingly stande at defiance with Christe, by whome we are with the Angels reconciled to God: It is surely to vnworthie a rewarde. And when Christe describeth the peaceable kingedome of Sathan, he doth not teach vs that it is therefore to be coueted: but rather he promiset it as a greate rewarde, that a stronger than he encounteringe with him, shoulde bereue him of
Gy his

John Caluine concerninge

his vsurped authoritie. For if we see the
so couragious, whiche ambitiously fight
for soueraintie or for their libertie, that
they woulde not passe to abide any trou-
bles: with how muche moze valiant cou-
rage, ought we to set our selues against
the tempestuous troubles, which Satan
stirreth vp to disquiet the kingdome of
Christe: the Sonne shall rise against his
father: the father shall not spare the life
of his sonne: one brother shall lay waite
for another. Are these thinges tolde be-
fore, to the entent that me should shunne
the Gospell: and not rather that beyng
warned in time, they might not conceiue
any feare at the straügenesse of the mat-
ter: For I haue not to doe with any o-
ther, than suche as abuse the name of
Christe, to colour theyr painted peace.
And yet I am not ignorant that troubles
some persones in mouinge seditions, are
the bellowes of Sathan wherewith he
kindleth men (otherwise quiet of them-
selues,) in hatred against the Gospell.
So in our age about the beginnyng of
the Gospell springyng vp againe, he ar-
med barbarous men to proclayme open
warre

warre against lawes, iudgementes, and all kinde of ciuill pollicie. But as it is not vnknownen to vs, what such kinde of packing meanes, so if we do aske peace from the bottome of our harte, we shall by assured tryall, feele it offered vnto vs of God by his Gospell, in such wise that we shall haue it stedfastly also amonge men. To swarue from the Gospell, to the intent to pzeuent sedition, is a point of to much peruersnesse.

To outwarde appearance, this that foloweth is a iuster cause of Offence: that as soone as the doctrine of the Gospell began to bee published, as though the veyne of some springe had bene opened, the wickednesse of many spowted forth, which had befoze semed holy men. Howbeit it had bene muche more mate, that this shoulde abayle to the confirmation of the Faith. When Simeon assigneth this duetie to Christe, to disclose the thoughtes of many hartes, so little doth any man or none stand in deniall therof, that the sentence is to be reioyled at. What absurditie then is founde in the matter? Let vs suppose it had neuer bene
Gij spoken

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spoken, to the intent that without preiudice, the thinge that appereth, maye be esteemed so to be in deede. Whereas about thirtie yeres agoe, religion flourished euery where, and all men without gaine saynge consented in the worshippe of God, which was then commonly receyued: now vngodlinesse and contempt of God gusheth forth euerywhere. First and formeest I say, it is no maruell if light doe chase away darknesse: for it is a common prouerbe of olde time, that the dungeons of mans harte are so deepe, & the nookes thereof so windynge, that it surmounteth almost al bottlesse pittes: now if mans dessemblynge be deceitfull in any case, he dalieith with wonderfull leudnesse toward God, where he ought to doe it least. To the furtherance hereof commeth the wilinesse of Sathan: who partly by castinge a miste of ignorance, and partly by disguisinge the seruice of God with visers of ceremonies, maketh a wonderfull shewe of Religion where none is. All men that haue eyes doe see that it hath bene so vnder the Poperie. For there the consciences as it were bewitched

witched with the poysons of Circe, are brought in a maze by their longe windlasses, flæting from the earnest meaning of God. For that same vnmeasurable heape of Ceremonies, is assuredly the denne of thæues: bycause the hypocrites beyng wrapped in those disguysinges, thinke they may do what they list without checke. If suche securitie do take away the difference betwene true and feined Religion, it is no maruell. And if at any time thei sême to approach any thing nere God, they do not to any other ende so much weary and disquiet themselves, than that the inward wickednesse of the harte beyng by such remedies appeased, shoulde be at rest inwardly. Now, if by bringyng in the light of the Gospell, hypocrisie be put to flight, and wickednesse openly discouered, the offence thereupon taken, is vnrightfull and peruerse. In old time amonge heathen men, no man was counted a dispiser of God, except he were a manifest murtherer, or a forger of Testamentes, or a forsworne person, and wrapped in all kinde of leudnesse. For in asmuch as they had made to them

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selues carnall Gods, nothyng was moze easie than to be religious. But we see how sharply the Prophetes do inuey against skozners: the which thinge out of all doubt, they do not without weightie causes. So the vngodlinesse which shewed it selfe in the Churche of God, appeared to be none at all in maner amonge the vnbeleuers: shall we therefore saye that the lawe and the Prophetes were bellows to styre the same vp: shall the pure Religion therefore, whiche drew that Serpent to light, be made the lesse accompte of: Pra verely euen in the Church of God, Ismaell vttered not himselfe to be a skozner, but after that Isaac was bozne. He whiche before was nexte vnto holy Abraham, did sodainly burst out into wicked skoznyng the grace of God, wherby he deserued to be banished his fathers house. Dought such an example to haue alienated the householde of Abraham from his holy Offspringe: Furthermore, that whiche was lightly shadowed in Isaac, was needeful to be more clerely expressed in Christe, and the Historie of the Gospell beareth witnesse that

that it was so done. For we know that since he was brought into the worlde, howe much the madnesse of them hath boyled, whiche befoze times did bragge them selues of the title of Religion.

Wherfoze let this malicious opiniõ take his leaue and be packinge, that libertie to do naughtely springeth out of the doctrine of the Gospell, bycause it draweth wickednesse out of his lurking holes into the open light. And rather let vs be glad of this, that the thoughtes are discovered out of the hartes of many: howbeit, of this matter there is another reason also to be marked: namely whẽ some vtterly refuse the grace of the Gospell offered vnto them: & some disdeinfully sippe of it a little with their lippes: and other some proudly caste it of from them hauinge receiued it befoze: doth not the vnthankfulnesse of them all deserue, that God should punish it sore? And vndoubtedly he punisheth sore in deede, whẽ takinge away the sealinge of Religion, he casteth them headlong into this horrible blindnesse. As many men therfoze as we see at this day like Lucian, scoffe and

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lest at the whole Religion of Christe : as many also as we see like Epycures , set themselves to sale to all kinde of naughtinesse without the feare of God : so many examples of Goddes vengeance , let vs know to be set before our eyes , which may commende vnto vs the worthinesse and preciousnesse of the Gospell . Paule sayeth , that they were worthely giuen ouer to a reprobate minde , and to filthie and shamefull lustes , who vniustly suppressed such knowledge of God , as may be conceiued by the onely beholdinge of the worlde : to the entent that they which had defrauded God of his honour , beyng subiect to vtter reproche , mighte receiue the deserued hyze of their vnthankfulness . The greater sacriledge that the contempt of the Gospell is , so much the lesse maruell it is , if crueller punishment be taken thereof . And why so ? For shall we confesse that they deserued to be punished , who through theyr slouthfulness suffered the little sparkes to be quēched , whiche appeared in the frampnge of the worlde : and would we haue them freely mocke God , who of wilfull malice do ouer :

ouerwhelme & extinguiſh the full bright-
neſſe of the glozy of God, thynng in his
Goſpell: But if it bee very good Juſtice,
that God puniſhe grieuouſly the contẽpt
and caſtyng away of his grace, why are
we offended to ſee the ſame puniſhment
(whiche is cõmendable) put in execution:
nay rather it would become vs (as I haue
ſayd alreadie) that like as by this meanes
God auoucheth the maieſtic of his Go-
ſpell, ſo the reuerence thereof ſhoulde be
ſtabliſhed in our mindes: howe can the
Goſpell be entertained as it is worþhie,
whereby he offereth and giueth him ſelfe
to vs in the perſon of his ſonne: And yet
many doe ſcarce vouchſaue the common
honour vpon this incõparable thzeasure:
ſome treade it vnderfoote: ſome without
remoꝛſe of conſcience pꝛeferre the vayne
pleaſures of the woꝛld befoze it: and ma-
ny (as though it were ſome maygame,)
doe turne it in ieſtyng to a heatheniſhe
paſtime: but what followed theruppon:
whereas befoze was at leaſte yet ſome
feare of God ſettled in their mindes, now
like a ſozte of dogges they barke agaynſt
God. And in this their ſharpnes of witte
they

they greatly delight them selues, or rather take themselues for halfe Goddes, bicause they dare turne vp their tayles against the cloudes. But if it be a monstrous thyng for a man to be turned into a beast, they are so muche the more to be lamented, in that thei are not touched with any sorrowe for their euill: they laugh smoothely at the foolish toyes of the Papistes: but themselues are vnworthie that euer they shoulde returne to the papistrie: for it is not conuenient that their ende should be like other mennes, who haue partly had in derision, and partly in contempt the holy blond of Christe, the euerlastyng truth of God, and the light of life. And assuredly the contempte of the Gospell whiche nowe reigneth, is a certaine forgetoken of some beastly kinde of life. For, seinge that this is the laste remedie to cure mens vices, namely when God shineth vpon them with his Gospel, whome soeuer this remedie helpeth not, it is most certaine that they are incurable: and they whiche wittingly and willingly doe either iest away or driue away their Physicion, doe wilfully procure thei selues

selues any death. Nowe to conclude this title, suche as deeme vngodlinesse a heynous mischief (as it is in deede) thei iudge by the grieuousnesse of the punishment, in how ill parte the Lord taketh the contempt of his Gospell: and by warnynge therof are confirmed in faith & obedience to him. It is knowen to euery man, that Agrippa, Villanouan, Delet and suche like, did like Giauntes with one eye in they; forehead fearyng neither God nor manne, euer presumptuously despise the Gospell: at the last they fell to suche madnesse & outrage, that they not onely spewed out moste abhominable blasphemies against the sonne of God, but (as much as pertaineth to the life of y^e soule,) did thinke themselues to differ nothinge from Dogges and Hogges. Other some, (as Rabelayse, Depei, and Gouean) after they had tasted of the Gospell, were stricken with the same blindnesse. And why happened this, but bicause they had by their wicked malapertnesse of iestyng & scoffyngs, heretofore profaned that holy pledge of eternall life: I name a fewe, whosoever are of the same stampe, let vs know

know that the Lord doth as it were with his finger pointe them out to vs for an example, to the entent we shoulde carefully continew in the race of our vocation, least the like happen vnto vs.

Furthermore forasmuch as these forlorne men by theyr slidinge, or rather by their headlong fallinge downe, do not onely offende the weake, but also do thead abroade the poyson of their vngodlines, to the entent to bring al the world in beliefe that there is no God: I muste set my selfe at defence against this stumbling blocke also. And that doth the holy Ghost, while he warneth vs that there shall come mockers whiche shall trouble our hope with scoffinges: but the same spirite affirmeth that vnstable soules shalbe in daunger of theyr enticements. To the entent therfore that we maye be out of perill, we must gather strength in Christe. It is a solemne custome amonge these vnpure Dogges, that the more libertie thei haue to belk out blasphemies, the more they playe the scoffers. So by their mery iestyng in talkyng at the table, they girde at all the principles of Religion.

ligion. And first of all they winde themselves into their matter by ouerthwart nippes, or couert conceytes: howbeit all tendeth to this end, to blurre out of mens mindes all feare of God: for at length they burst out into this opinion, that all Religions are deuised of mans bzaigne: that there is a God, because men list to beleue so: that the hope of the life to come was inuented to swode forth the simple withall: and that the dread of dommes day is but a bug to feare childre with. These songes of the Meremaydes are to apt to delight the eares of many men, but it is suche eares as are already tickled with the same itch of themselves. For we see some so greedely snatch at, and hunte for those thinges that make to the takynge away of the feelinge of godlinesse, that hauinge in maner scarce perceiued the sounde of a fewe wordes, by and by they raunge fro the eternall and vnchaungeable truth of God. And surely whosoever hath but meanly traveled in the worde of God, when he shall haue tried that our faith is farre otherwise grounded than vpon opinion, he shal not so easily wauer.

And

And they that beare the seale of the spirite prynced in their hartes, it is farre vnlike that they should be ouerthrowen with the assaultes of these engines. But this is it that Paule meaneth where he sayeth: That me make shipwreke in the faith, after the time that they haue fallen from a good conscience: whereby he meaneth bothe that this is the keper of right vnderstandynge, and that it is no wonder though they haue nothinge stedfaste among them, whiche are tossed amonge the sundry waues of their lustes. There is no cause therefore why we should be troubled with this Godlesnesse, whiche now partly rageth euerywhere through the whole worlde, but specially reaigneth in the Courtes of Kinges and Princes, in iudgement places, and in other glorious trades of liuyng: for if I shoulde demaunde of one that had skill in thinges, (yea and it were euen of those, who cannot ridde themselves from this temptation,) whiche of them all there did harborow a good conscience, their answer would be in a readinesse, that it is banished a great way of: wherefore then do we

we wonder at that shipwreche of Faith,
whiche Paule teacheth must needs fol-
lowe: Moreouer if they so warely keepe
money bestowed in coffers, as many as
are any thyng smittē with the loue ther-
of, what excuse shall he lay for him selfe,
whiche beyng fenced with no garde of
God, doth set him selfe forth wilfully to
the spoyle, if he be robbed of the heauenly
treasure: specially considering we know
that nothinge is so hurtfull as these cop-
webbes of the wicked. For it is not my
minde to extenuate the perill that maye
come by them. but rather I admonish and
testifie, that no Serpēt hath so venemous
a blast as they, and therfore it behoueth
vs to be so much the more waker & care-
full to be ware of them. By the waye, I
say that al such shalbe free from this con-
tagion (be it neuer so pestiferous) as haue
not forslowed to rote themselves deepe
in Christe. Neither is this my sayinge,
but the sayinge of Paule: that we ought
to growe in Christe untill we come to be
perfect men: least we be any more subiect
to the subtiltie of men, which goe about
to deceiue vs. Notwithstanding, we must
harken

harken also to another exhortation of Paule: namely that forasmuch as we are ensured to the Sonne of God vpon this condition, that we should keepe our promise of mariage vnto him vniolate, we ought in especially to beware that the Deuil corrupt vs not with his flattering enticementes. For if the woman whiche hath giuen eare to allurementes of bawdrie, seemeth to haue giuen already some signe of vnchastnesse, it appeareth that those soules are scarce chaste, whiche delight to be moued to false forsaking their obedience to God.

The reason of all errors is not much vnlike herunto. The faith of many quaueth: and some doe vtterly fall from the Gospell, because they coniecture it to be the seede of error. As though any man should giue ouer tillage and sowinge of the ground, because the pure seede doth oftentimes degenerate into cockle. To the entent the straungenesse of the matter shoulde not abashe any man, Christe warned vs that it shuld come so to passe. For albeit that in that place he copareth Hypocrites to darnell, and the true and naturall

naturall Sonnes of God to wheate: yet he sheweth howe this is the accustomed fraude of Sathan, to corrupte and defile the heauenly seede of God by al y meanes he can; to the entent it shoulde not come to fruitfulnessse: we know that the world lay a longe time barreyne like a waste and vntilled ground. Nowe hath God sowed the doctrine of his Gospell by his Ministers: do we maruell if Sathan do intermedle as many corrupt errorrs as he can: For what whole wayneloades of false opiniōs hath he not brought in immediately with the first springynge bp of the Gospell: I do omit the innumerable multitude. But what cā be deuised more prodigious than the dotinges of Valentin, of Montane, and of the Manichees: Now it is to much folly, that they which counte it for a miracle that the light of the Gospell was not quēched in so thicke darknesse, or whiche hartely reioyce to heare, that the strength therof hath continued vnappalled againste so many assaults, should be offended at the doctrine of the Gospell, bicause now also Sathan sullieth it with the darknesse of his lies.

Iohn Caluine concerninge

Howbett, forasmuche as men do sundry
waies stumbe at this rocke, I will brief-
ly shewe, y there is no kinde of Offence,
the which they incurre not of their owne
accoorde, either through their slothful-
nesse, or els some other singular vice of
theyr owne. They whiche simplie make
this one obiection, that sectes do bud out
of the doctrine of the Gospell, partly are
glad to seeke startingholes, and partly,
through ouermuch lightnesse do lay the
cause of euill vpon the Gospell, whiche
resteth otherwhere. Who so euer will
bouchsaufe to open his eyes, he shall
plainely see that the Gospell is not onely
the pure and cleere truthe of God, but al-
so the best bonde of holy vnitie. For we see
Sathan rise vp against it, to the entent
he may darkē this light with the cloudes
of errours, and rende the vnitie asunder.
wherein the sonnes of God do knit the-
selues together, he dothe but his office.
For he is bothe the father of lies, and al-
so the authour and craftesmaister of all
debate. It were our duetie therefore, so
muche the moze earnestly to labour in
searchinge out the truth, and to embrace
it

it the more constantly when we have founde it. These men doe not onely absteyne from all such endeavour and flie from it, but also doe set this as a shield of defence against God, that they be not compelled to obeye his commaundement.

Othersome, al be it that they seeke not meanes for the nonce howe they may reject the wholesome doctrine, yet because they take occasion at every light blast to starte backe, they haue nothinge whiche they may iustly alledge for their excuse. But you will say, thei feare not without cause, least if beyng vncertaine whiche way to goe they should yelde themselves pliable, they might through this pliabilitye, be snarled in the snares of errors. This is in deede somewhat: but there was a better prouiso than this, for that danger: namely to submitt themselves to God by godly humilitie, modestie, sobernesse, and reuerence. For Christe hath not for nothinge promised that the doore shalbe opened to them that knocke: neither is he endewd with the spirite of iudgement and discretion from the Father for nothinge. Also it is not for no-

It is

thing

thinge that the Lorde promiset by the mouth of his prophete Esay to become an attendant scholemaister to his people, alwayes readie at their backe, to direct their steppes. Finally, neither to deceiue nor to beguile vs, doth he say that the waye of life is shewed to vs in his word. Whereby it appeareth, that a great parte of men doe wittely couet this thinge, to despise remedies, and to waere numme in their owne euils.

And whercas we see many, which being intangled with this or that error, are led astray from the right way: it neuer happeneth but by the iust vengeance of God. First Augustine truely nameth pryde the mother of all Heresies. For there was neuer yet any maister of error, whome leude desire of vaine glory puffed not vp to his owne hedlonge fallinge. We know that God is a faithfull teacher to the little ones: we know that Christe calleth the humble and meeke to him to be his disciples: wherefore such as swell with pryde, it is no maruell though they be driuen out of this schole, and be carried vp and downe with their owne waues.

wauerynge speculations. As many as in
 this our age fallynge from the pure do-
 ctrine of the Gospell, haue begonne to be
 teachers of false opinions, we shall finde
 that al of them beyng taken with the di-
 seale of pryde, haue forged punishment of
 the witte, bothe to themselves and to o-
 thers. In steede of many let the onely ex-
 ample of Seruet suffice. For he beyng
 puffed vp with Spanish pryde, and swel-
 lyng mozeouer with his owne arrogan-
 cie, determined this to be the best waye
 for him to get him a name, if he snapped
 at all the principles of Religion. What-
 soener therefore hath of antiquitie from
 the very time of the Apostles bene by the
 Fathers leste, concerning the thre per-
 sones in God, and receiued from time to
 time continually by the godly, he not one-
 ly reiecteth as vsauerie, but also with to
 outrageous rayling, tosseth and turmoy-
 leth it: now that same currish rage of bi-
 tyng and barkyng, which all the wyters
 of that rable do vtter, dothe sufficiently
 testifie what maner of spirite stirreth the
 man. But if ye come to the matter, ye
 shall clereely perceyue, that their greedie

hunger, being inflamed with vnsatished
thirste of vaine glozie, hath caused them
to quaffe vp all kinde of most absurde do-
tages so desirously, that they haue made
themselves dronken therewithal. He sur-
miseth that the worde of God was not,
befoze suche time as Moyles bringeth in
God speakyng in the beginnyng of the
world. As who should say, that then first
of all he beganne to be, when he shewed
plainly his so great power: & not rather
that he declared a proufe of his eternall
beyng. He in such wise Deifieth Chrystes
flesh, that abolishyng the truth of his
manhode, he maketh his Godhead which
is spirituall, to be palpable. And yet cal-
linge Chryste God with full mouthe, he
deuiseth vs, I cannot tell what maner of
shadowye Ghost: as if ye would saye he
had from the beginnyng bene nothyng
but an Idea of Plato: and that of any o-
ther right he was not the sonne of God,
but bycause he was conceiued by the holy
Ghost in the wombe of the Virgin. In the
meane while, he heapeth together many
cartloades of speculations, whiche haue
so litle colour or none at all, that any ma
beyng

being in his right wittes may easily perceiue, that none could not so play the dis-
zard, but he that is bewitched with the
loue of him selfe. But if that as sone as
the truthe of God hath put by her head,
proude wittes are bothe by their owne
ambition moued, & by the Deuill driuen,
either to darkē, or els to peruert it with
theyr leude gloses and frantike opiniōs,
there is no cause why we should be trou-
bled as with a straunge matter. Where-
fore as we haue saide before, that pryde
is the mother of al Heresies: so the vaine-
nesse of them that make themselues dis-
ciples of such maisters, is the continuall
nource to cherishe the same. As often as
any errour is spred by the false prophet,
Moyles affirmeth vs to be tried whither
we loue God frō the hart. To what ende
is that, but that we may know, that none
other are ledde away from the pure do-
ctrine, but such as vnder a false profession
did cōterfaste holinesse. As for the faith
whiche is stedfastly rooted, these engines
can so little ouerthrow, that they do ra-
ther make manifest the firmnesse therof:
like as Paule writeth, that when sectes

do reigne in the Church, those which are tried be made manifest. Wherby it is the lesse wonder, that as soone as any blast of a newe sect bloweth, many slide aside hither and thither, seinge very fewe haue y^e feare of God imprinted in their hartes. So much the lesse becometh it vs to stagger with the multitude.

To take occasion of leude behaviour of the Gospell, hath now from olde time bene customable to many. Not without cause do the Apostles so oftentimes giue warning of bridelyng our libertie, least it should be turned into a fleshly licentiousnesse. For euenmore the flesh at euery light occasiō, doth by and by auance it selfe. But as bondage is a harde thing and contrary to mans nature: a greafe sorte (by what meanes so euer they may shake of the yoke) doo deeme that the blessed life consisteth therein. Under this pretence the bondme in old time, (as though by proclamation of the Gospell they had bene called to libertie,) were puffed vp with stubburnnesse: in so much that some of them wrested themselves from subiection of the Kinges and Magistrates.

Like

Like wise at this daye many of the rascall
sorte, haupng taken a snatch of the Gos-
pell, doo boaste themselues arrogantly:
householde sernautes doo take hault and
stoute stomackes to the: very many for-
getting al shame and modestie, dare pre-
sume any thing. But this is worst of all,
that many doo in suche wise set theselues
free from the obedience of God him selfe,
as if by adoptinge vs to be his sonnes, he
had abrogated from him selfe all fatherly
right and authoritie ouer vs. Surely it
is a foule leudnesse, & with the vnwor-
thinesse therof might grievously wounde
all godly mindes. But lette the wronge
done to God burne vs, rather than we
shoulde double it. We heare what Esay
hath testified of the meekenesse of Christ:
we heare what Christe preacheth of him
selfe: Learne of me (sayth he) bicause I
am meeke and lowly of hart. And for this
rause (as Paule admonisheth,) when he
was in the shape of God, he abased him
selfe, to the end that we shoulde learne hum-
blenesse of him. Seynge that the Sonne
of God descended from the heauenly
throne of his maiestie downe hither, that
beyng

being cladde with our fleash, he might abide not onely the state of a scruant, but also the vtter reproche of the Crosse, whiche of vs may not be ashamed of our selues to looke so loftely, that we shoulde either be, or seeme to be any thing at all. Those that excell in great riches and honours, to the entent they may make themselves confor[mable] to the example of their maister, must needs (as it were) forgettunge their owne greatnes) come downe to y^e baser state. It is therfore to preposterous an arrogancie of the lower sorte, if they begin to take highly vpon the vnderpretence of the Gospell. For greate men are not commaunded to departe with their right, to the entent that men otherwise being abietes, should vsurpe the right of other men. But this doctrine doth not onely prescribe vnto any seuerall person the boundes of his duetie: but also ministereth chastisementes vnto vs, wherewith to rebate the malapartnesse of lustie mates, and by the way it turneth the enuie & blame of this euill from the Gospell. It cannot lightly otherwise be, when miserly wretches endewd with no riches,
no

no authoritie, no wit, no: no estimacion;
as sone as they haue learned to prate of
the Gospell, doe steppe stoutely in, not
without contempt of others, but that so
great an vnworthinesse shall make men
of good nature and that haue any hart, to
stomacke the matter. Howbeit the folly
of a great sorte is so childishe, y^e it ought
rather to moue vs to pittie them, thā pro-
uoke vs to stomacke against them. Not
withstandynge, let vs graunt there is
that greatly offendeth vs: shall our sto-
mackynge against so folishe a pryde, light
altogether vpon the very authour of all
modestie?

Behold on the other parte, many defile
linge (as much as in them is) the profes-
sion of the Gospell with their dissolute
and filthie life: wherupon riseth another
stumblingblocke, next cousin to that which
went before. And surely seinge that we
(as Paule testifieth) by liuynge holply
& honestly, doe adorne the Gospell, loke
how many doe cocker themselues with a
licentiousnesse of liuynge, so many re-
proches and spottes of Christendome are
there. And it is not to be doubted but
that

that the horrible vengeance of God hangeth over the heades of all suche, as by their leude behauiour doe diffame the doctrine of godlinesse, and make the holy name of God a laughynge stocke to others. They shal one day feele how intolerable a crime it is, to haue prophaned the holy threasure of the Gospell: & howe it was not spoken in vayne, that they should not escape vnpunished that abuse the name of God. They shall feele howe precious the soules are to God, to whom through their euill exāple they haue foreclosed the way of Saluation. First it is a pointe of to muche lewdnesse, to confesse God with their mouth, whome they deny in their deedes, as Paule sayeth: and to pretend to be the Disciples of the heavenly wisdom, when theyr whole life argueth a manifest contempt of God. But this is more than an heynous wickednesse, to abuse the Gospell to the cloyng of our naughtinesse. I speake now of the common practise, wherewith false and naughtie men doe winde themselves in, to deceiue, to defraude, and by all meanes to hurte. I haue scene some ere
this,

this, that were not ashamed to colour
their bawdie and vnpure bargayninges
vnder the shadow of the Gospell. Other
some that are lesse wicked, doe not with-
standyng by their dissolute liuing, bothe
defile the Church with the filth of theyr
vices, and also stayne the Gospell. More-
ouer it is a thinge miserable and to be la-
mented at, that the wickednesse of men
shoulde not onely be imputed to the doc-
trine of holinesse, but also that the same
shoulde be shamefully staundzed in their
persone. But there is another byle of the
Church more to be lamented, that the
sheapehearde, (I say) the sheapehearde
themselues (who mount into the pulpit,
that is to say the holy iudgement seate of
God, to the entent they should excell all
other men in purenesse of life,) are now
and then most filthie examples, either of
naughtinesse, or of al other euils. Where-
by it cometh to passe, that their sermons
obteine no more credite or estimation,
than if a player shoulde playe an enter-
lude vpon a stage. And yet such men make
complainte, that they are had in contempt
amonge the common people, or els in
scorne

scorne pointed at with the finger. I doe rather wonder at the sufferance of the people, that women and childre bedaubed them, not with dirte and dunge. They extoll the worthinesse of the ministerie with full mouth: but they remember not that the cause why no honour is giuen to their ministerte, is by reason that they themselues defile it with their filthy liuinge. For as it was truely saide of one in olde time: be amiable to the entent thou may be beloued: so it behoueth them that will be had in estimation, that they purchase them reuerence by their grauitie and holy conuersaciō. And would God the Church might be purged and disburdened of such a sorte of rakehelles. But it falleth out farre otherwise for the most parte. For whereas they know theselues to be worthely despised, their euill conscience may abridge their libertie. Finally, forasmuche as they may perceiue that for the shamefullnesse of their euill liuing, they are vnderlinges to all men, eyther shame and feare restraineth them that they dare not hisse, at such times as they ought earnestly to crie that whiche they perforce

performe not themselves: or els they are compelled to beare with offenders & to flatter the. Besides this, they are slouthfull bellies, who to the entet that hauing taken their farewell of all painfullnesse, they maye settle themselves to idlenesse and pleasures, could finde in their hartes to let Heauen & Earth to be confounded together. Many of them also for hatred of vertue, doe willingly beare with the vices, as wel of themselves as of other men. And the people to requite them with the like good turne, doe loue, embrace, & cherishe them and none other, and to the entent to haue them as patrones of their faultes, mainteine them with their defence. Notwithstandinge they cease not to obiect, that the corrupt livinge of the pastours, is a stumbling blocke that they come not to Christe. Surely it is to scornwardly and impudently: neyther is any man worthie to be excused, whome other mens sinnes withholde from comminge vnto Christe. Whiche is no more to say, than if a man would refuse to drinke of a fountaine, because he would alledge it to be growen about with briars & thornes.

whereas neuerthelesse he mighte with
small labour and lesse daunger ouerpasse
the lettes. Bicause thei see diuers hauing
the Gospell in their mouth, liue wicked-
ly and naughtely: behold the Gospell say
they. How muche more of right shoulde
they with sorowe acknowledge, that
greate wronge is done vnto God, when
the liuyng answereth so euill to the doc-
trine. If the cloudes cast a miste vpon the
earth, no man is so mad or so leude, to cal
the Sunne mistie. But great is the diffe-
rence betwene the clerenesse of the sunne,
and the clerenesse of the Gospell. For al-
though mistes maye darken the Sunne,
yet the leudnesse of men can not bryng to
passe; but that the brightnesse of y^e whole
some and godly doctrine, maye shine
through, wherby our life (all darkenesse
being wiped away) is reformed into true
righteousnesse: shall we then confesse
the Sunne to be clere, euen when it is
hidden: and shall the sinnes of me, (what
sorte soener they be of,) dazle our eyes,
when we see the bright lighte of the Go-
spell, and the glorie of Christe shininge
therein:

As

As concerning the Guides theſelues,
Chriſte knew alreadie, that it redounded
moſte to the ſlaunder of the doctrine, if
they liue ſilthely. To the entent to turne
away this ſtumbling blocke, he exhorteth
men to obſerue that whiche they com-
maunde, although they doe not with the
leaſt of their fingers touche the burdens,
whiche they lay vpon othermens ſhoul-
ders. It was at that tinte the office of the
Scribes, to inſtruct the people in the law
of God, as long as thei were in y^e chayre
of Moſes, they were the interpreters of
Gods lawe: and at home or in place of o-
pen aſſembly, they were full of fraude,
pryde, crueltie, perſurie, and aduentured
licentiouſly vpon all thinges. Neuerthe-
leſſe Chriſt willeth, that the authoritie of
the worde of God, remaine vnto it vn-
touched. This admonitiō was not pecu-
liar to one age. but rather at this day alſo
the heauenly voice cryeth in our eares, y^e
holwoſoener y^e paſſours leade a life not al-
together agreeable to their profeſſiō, yet it
is lewdly done, to miſreport the Goſpell
any whit therfore. As ſurely, it is an
unſeemly matter, to meaſure by the per-

uerse livinge of men, the rule which God hath prescribed for vs to liue well by. Merely they shal one day come to reckning, and they shall seele how that saying was not denouced for nothings: that it should now be better for a man to be drowned in the bottome of the sea, with a millstone about his necke, than to offende any one of the least. Howbeit, in the meane while it behoueth vs to hie vs towarde the marke, the same waye whiche the Lords hath paved.

Neuerthelesse the Offence in this behalfe is doubled, when the heynousnesse of the mischiefes is increased with priuate hurte. Some beyng getly enterteyned as guestwise, doo either priuely goe awaye loaden with theft, or els beguile theyr Hoste and Hostesse by some other meanes, or els allure the maide seruants to whoredome, and sometime also aduerture to trie the wiues themselves. Some being their craftes maisters in catching, doo leaue them starke naked, to whome they had promised moultaynes of Golde: some deceiue in lending: some denie restitution of thinges laide to gage: some are

are vnfaithfull in felowship: some spende the money wastfully, which they had receyued of almesse of good and thriuinge men, either in whozehuntynge, or dicing, or other riottous excesses: some lash out in idle expenses that which was lente the to further their industrie with. And vnto these wickednesses many haue the companie of their wiues. Some sticke not to breake the most holy bonde of wedlocke, deceiuing their wiues, and casting away their children. There are no examples of suche wickednesses, than that a shorte beaderoll can comprehend them. Certainly it cannot be, but that the lewdnesse of these men, must strike a sore and greuous wound in honest natured mindes. And specially it must needs be, that good men are dismayed, when hauinge but a litle ptece of money, they see theselues spoyled thereof and brought to vnder povertie, vnder pretence of the Gospell, as if they had fallen into the handes of robbers. And this is to be registred amongst the harder sorte of our exercises, that we are compelled to looke vpon them, whiche so without checke make their game of the

Gospell. But if God, by the mouth of
Paule, do woorthely forefede vs, that al-
beit we finde many vnthankfull and
lewde persones, yet we shoulde not be
weary of doyng well: and that he do it
to the entent that if any good man should
haue neede, our duetie should not be vn-
performed: howe muche more diligently
ought we to take hede, that the lewdnesse
of men byng vs not to such a wayward-
nesse, that we become vnthankfull and
impious towarde God. And therfore like
as it becometh vs to wathe earnestly,
that no doore be left open to such varlets
to do harme, by pzeuenting their secrete
practises in time, and by endeuozyng (as
much as in vs lieth) that deceytes and eu-
ill doynges be punished streightly by
the Magistrate, to the entent that suche
as make a mockage of Gods worde, and
such as reprochfully scoffe at the Church,
may accoꝝdyng to their desertes haue the
hangman for their maister, and the gal-
lowes for their schoole: so must we againe
some what more diligently take hede of
the craftes of Sathan, least by castyng in
our waye the losse of a little transitorie
money,

money, he shake vs quife from our hea-
 uenly treasure. For that is it that he go-
 eth about, and it is moze pernicious vnto
 vs. Whosoener hath faith in Christe
 (saith John) he sanctifieth him selfe.
 Those that aspire not to this sanctifying,
 forasmuch as we know they falsely pre-
 tende the name of Christ, what reason is
 there, that thei should trouble and hinder
 vs with theyr lewdenesse? The Gospell
 is the bread of lyfe: and yet it is a harde
 matter to bypge to passe, that all men
 shoulde digest it, when as of many that
 seeme to swallowe it greedely, fewe do
 take the taste of it thoroughly. Finally,
 when Christe compareth his Church to
 a barnesflore, where y^e wheate is so ming-
 led with the chaffe, that for the molle
 parte it lieth hidde vnder it, he likeneth
 not straungers to the chaffe, but such as
 vnder profession of the Gospell, keepe
 place amöge the godly. To what purpose
 also shoulde he haue testified that he will
 not know many in the last daye, whiche
 shall boast theselues to haue bene preach-
 ers of his Gospell, and obiect that they
 haue wrought miracles: but that there

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muste needes be some suche in all ages:
Sometime also it commeth to passe, that
they which otherwise feare God frā their
harte, or at leastwise are not altogether
reprobates, doe by fallinge into some fil-
thie faulte, shame bothe themselves, and
the pure Religion whiche they followe.
How great was that trespassse of David,
whē followyng his owne lust, in rauish-
yng another mannes wife, he not onely
shed the guiltlesse bloud of one man that
had deserued well at his hande, but also
as much as in him laye, deliuered all the
people of God to destruction: If I listed
to gather together Offences of this sort,
which were able to peruert euen the He-
roicall men, what monstrous wicked-
nesses saue the holy Patriarch Jacob at
home in his owne house: After that his
daughter was forced, Simeon and Levi
through as outrageous crueltie, as vn-
speakable trayterousnesse, murdered the
Sichimites. His sonnes beyng thus em-
bowed with slaughter, conspired the
murder of their Brother. At length to
encrease the heape of mischieues, it came
to passe that his first begottē sonne com-
mitted

mitted incest, in companyng with his
stepmother. And yet the Church of God
was at y^e time inclosed within one house:
I abstaine from recitinge any moe exam-
ples. But at this daye diuers doe searche
out a fewe Offences with Linxes eyes,
to the entent thei may not haue ought at
all to doe with the whole Church of God,
as farre as it stretcheth eueryway, with
this one example I am cōtent to haue ad-
monished my Readers, that the faith shal
be to vnsstable, if at the seuerall ruines of
men, it doe from time to time waie faint.
In the meane while, this is to be helde
for an infallible rule: that it commeth to
passe by the determinate counsell of God,
that euill men are euermore mixed with
the good. By this meanes bothe the con-
stantnesse of the faith is tried, and we be
exercised to patience, & the desire to pray
is quickned, & the stingyng of the prickes
doe moue vs earnestly, to walke warily
and wisely, and the cōtempt of the world
riseth thereupon, and together with de-
sire of departyng hence, mindfulnessse of
the heauenly life encreaseth. But if the
cause lie hidde, yet let vs knowe that a

parte of our warfare, which we must followe during all the race of our lyfe, both consist in these exercises.

Greatly also annoyeth the lightnesse which is commonly seene in diuers, whereas at the beginnyng they shew a marvellous feruentnesse, that flame within a while so vanisbeth away, that ye woulde say it was kindled of strawe. Othersome, although they stande furthermoze somewhat better to theyr tacklyng, yet by little and little they ware colde. That thing which commeth to passe, partly of bairnesnesse, partly of slouthfulnesse, and partly of earthly cares: the vnskilfull impute it to repentance. And therfore least it might repent them to late of proceeding to farre, they leape backe againe betimes. If any beyng dismayde, with feare of death or persecutions (which, the more pittie, happeneth to many) do fall from the Gospel, vpon their inconstancie is framed a foundation of Offence. Foule sorely is theyr fall: but in what sorte so euer we denie Christe all of vs, shall he therfore denie him selfe? Nay rather he shall euermoze remayne perfect, and alwaies from time

to time neuerthelesse be like him selfe, as
Paule also admonisheth. Farre other-
wise it woulde become vs, to be reformed
by suche exāples as these be: namely, that
beynge warned of our weaknesse, we
might carefully takehede, that the same
happened not to vs. After the time that
Paule had declared the Jewes to haue
fallē from the fauour of God, he sheweth
they fall to be so dreadfull, that he exhor-
teth and warneth others to beware. If
then the falling away of one mā. or two,
do vtterly dismaie them, whose careful-
nesse ought to be quickened, when whole
nations do fayle, who would not impute
the faulte to their peruerse iudgement?
Notwithstandinge it is not my purpose
to extenuate their fault, whiche as much
as in the lieth do make feeble the weake
soules. Oncly I would admonish such as
wauer when other fall, howe malicious
this amazednesse is: he hath denied Christ
who would haue thought it? He hath ta-
ken his leaue of the Gospell, whome all
men beleied to haue bene more firme thā
a rocke. That man is nowe luke warme:
& another is colder than Ice, when bothe
of

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of them were so feruent, that it was a wonder to see. But they that so speake, do not consider that some are therefore banquished with feare of death, bicause they haue not as yet conceived an assured hope of the life to come: & that othersome are stiffe for colde, bicause worldly cares do alaye the heate of the spirite in them. But what booteth it vs to drawe vnto vs wilfully the infectio of other mens diseases, seying remedie is at hande, if it be not refused: why do they not rather settle themselves in that so wholesome admonishment of Paule? For when he had spoken of Hymenezus and Philetus, whose falling might haue striken great fearfulness into all the godly, by and by he addeth that, which was able to assure them vp. This seale remaineth: The Lorde knoweth who are his. Therefore let him depart from iniquitie, whosoener calleth vpon the name of the Lorde. Forasmuch as those twayne were known and notable persones: Paule sawe it coulde not be, but that they by their headlonge falling, should compell some at least wise to waue. Notwithstandinge, he exhorteth
the

the chosen, to leane quietly vppon the defence of God: and he denieth, that there was any daunger of frettyng out the marke of saluation, which he had grauen in them: warnyng them by the way, that no man prophane the holy name of God, by counterfayte inuocatio. John also saw this stumblingblocke, to come thzough them, which by sheading abzoad the venom of their wicked doctrine, did at that time greatly anoye the Church. But while he testifieth it so to come to passe, to the entent it shoulde be manifest that all are not of the companie of the Godly which take the name vpo them, he sheweth therewithal a meane to ouercome the same stumblngblocke, whiche mighte trouble many. What shall a man saye of Alexander the Copper smith: when of a noble disciple of Christe, he became first a renegate, and afterwarde a most deadly enemye, is he not set forth for an example to others? What thinke ye of Demas: whē he embracyng this world did shamefully forsake the Gospell, ought he to drawe the reste with him into the same Labyrinth: when in another place Paule maketh

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maketh mention that he was forsaken of all men, doth he giue libertie to betraye the Gospel: when he complaineth that he was reiected of Phigelus, Hermogenes, and all the men of Asia, dothe he open a window of so wicked a departinge, vnto others: Nay rather, by such instructions all the Godly are awaked, to the entent their securitie shoulde not be in daunger of the Devils deccites. They are comanded to set before them, that euerlastynge signe of Gods election, in steade of a bulwarke against all assautes, in such wise that they scale by theyr faith also with a good conscience. For as much as I haue to doe with such kinde of men, as wilbe counted Christians, to the entent I stande not ouerlonge talkyng of the matter, let them reade the two Epistles of Paule to Timothy: the which I suppose wil suffice to appease theyr mindes: onlesse peraduenture they will either turmoyle with themselves for y^e nonce, or els seeke vaine pretences to fall from Christe wilfully. And surely with sounde & wise men this one thing wilbe able to vpholde theyr faith, y^e it were lewdly done to measure the eternall

nall truth of God by y^e swimmyng incon-
 stancie of men. But thei y^e are so wittie to
 take libertie of synnyng by euill exāples,
 why do thei not obserue so many wōder-
 ful exāples of vnuincible cōstancie, which
 might wōrthely stablisch their faith amōg
 whatsoeuer stormes of temptatiōs. This
 our age hath sene good store of martyrs
 goe chierfully & vnscarcfully to death. Nei-
 ther might men onely boaste themselves
 hereof, but in y^e womākinde also did God
 shew a strength surmountyng the strength
 of man. Surely y^e old stories do not make
 reporte of any hartie women, whiche the
 women y^e Flaunders & the Countie of Ar-
 thoyss hath brought forth a tennie yēeres
 agoe, do not matche. Shall then the false
 forsakyng of a few, ouerthrow our faith?
 Shall that same holy bloud (whereof eue-
 ry droppe are seales to as many godly
 hartes,) vanish away without estimatiō
 or strength? Although it be so vile to the,
 yet shall it not be without glorie before
 God. Neyther shall they scape unpunish-
 ed for accompanyng themselves wil-
 fully to their owne decaye, the miserable
 forsakers of Christe: and for neglectynge
 them

them that with stretched out handes call
vs vnto Heauen.

I come to that let, which in our time
hath kept many from cōpyng any thing
neare to Chyste. For they haue sene the
chiefe Doctors of the newespringynge
Churche, not onely disagree among them-
selues in contrarie opinions, but also
sharply encounter one against another.
Here a doubt entered into their mindes,
how much they were to be beleued that at
the first beginnyng dissented. Feare and
seare came vpon them, least they shoulde
vnadvisedly leape so farre, as fro whence
they mighte not retyre. Specially that
same unhappie contention as touchynge
the Sacramentes, it can scarcely be expres-
sed how many mens mindes it troubled.
Howe singular a practise of Sathan this
was to caste a chokepeare into fearefull
consciencs, I my selfe haue proued to
mine owne harme. But like as I after-
warde perceiued my selfe to haue bene
rather hindred by mine owne fault, than
withhelde by any iust cause, so I am not
afraide to giue the same iudgement vpo
all other men. I confesse there is in suche
disagree

disagréments, that whiche maye perce
those that be alreadie metely well cōfir-
med: and much moze those that be unskil-
ful and nouices. But I say: men ought to
gather their wittes about them, that thei
may continue in goyng towarde him,
who is neuer sought in vaine. For it
was not to the entent to deceiue vs, that
he promised, that if we knocke it shalbe
opened vnto vs: & that if we aske, it shall
be giuen vnto vs. They whiche boaste
themselues to be deteined still in Papi-
strie, for the hatred they beare to the dis-
sensations which they see in our parte: haue
no colour of excuse. I speake of a thyng to
well known. There is no point of Reli-
gion wherof their schoole diuines do not
dayly contende. How contrarie their opi-
nions be, howe hatefully they sometime
carpe, and sometime gyde one another,
theyr owne bookes beare witnesse. Yea
rather they count it a glorious matter to
professe diuerse sectes. And therefore the
innumerable brawlinges and bickerings
of the Papistes, do nothing offende these
good men: and yet one liely disagreement
amonge vs, so woundeth them, that they
bitterly

utterly abhorre fro al the whole doctrine.
Surely in one thinge the Papistes are to
agreable, that is in bablynge who may
bable moſte againſt the Gospell, no leſſe
leudly than ſtubburnely mainteyninge
theyr owne wicked ſuperſtitious. But
when they come amonge themſelues a-
gaine, they do nothyng elſe than ſtrive
one againſt another with hoarce and co-
fuſed chattering. I know that the Pokes
and other bablers of the ſame heare, are
ſo bzazen faced, and ſo farre paſte all
ſhame, y they ſcarre the ſiely people from
takynge any taſt of the Gospell, chiefly by
this reaſon, becauſe we are not fully a-
greed amonge our ſelues. As though the
walles of ſcholes did not ſounde agayne
of theyr contentions. As though all their
bookes (as is aforeſaide) were not ſtuffed
with repugnant ſentences. But I mar-
uell not that they do ſo malapertly, who
take lamentable wickedneſſe for ver-
tue. But howe commeth it to paſſe, that
well ſighted men, (to whome none of
theſe thinges y I ſpeake of is vnknowen,)
do pretende theſelues to be moued with
this Argument: Is not this as muche as
to

to shunne the light of set purpose: And in
so doyng they vaunt of their owne wis-
dome, that they entangle not themselves
in dangerous dissentions: deridynge the
as takinge no heede, who neuerthelesse
dare seeke the way of Saluation. But, in
as much as I see no better remedie to cor-
rect theyr pryde with, than to set them
lighte: I turne me to the simple, who
knowyng their owne vnskilfulnesse, had
rather abstepne from desire of searchyng
out the truthe, than to put themselves in
perill of erryng. When on the one side
Luther, and on the other side Oecolampa-
dius & Zwinglius, employed theyr laboure
earnestly to restore Christes kingdome,
that same vnhappie contention, concer-
nyng the holy Supper of the Worde, rose
prinely vp, into the societie wherof many
others were drawen. That from the con-
flict of these graunde Capitaynes, there
came fearfulness into the hartes of the
raue Souldiers, it is more to be lamen-
ted than to be wodered at, notwithstandinge
the raue Souldiers are to be ad-
monished, that they be not troubled out
of measure, in as much as it is an auncient

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pollicie of Sathan, to drawe the seruants
of God (otherwise well minded,) to strife
amonge them selues, to the entet he may
hinder the course of the wholesome doc-
trine : who would willingly yelde to the
snares of the Deuill ? So the dissension
betwene Paule & Barnabas, proceeded
euen to open defiance . So the dissention
betwene the same Paule and Peter , did
burst out into manifest confict . In these
three, al men acknowledge (as I sayd) the
pollicie of Sathan : and why the are they
blinde in this present businesse , where
theyr owne saluation is handled ? Some
will make exceptions, that those co-
tentions were not touching the doctrine.
What ? when some woulde nedes haue
the Ceremonies of Moyles lawe kepte
still, did not the doctrine come in questiō ?
But the Scisme proceeded so farre forth,
that it deuided in maner al the Churches:
will thei say it had bene meete the Gospel
should haue bene reiected, for that dissen-
tions sake ? It is well known that Lu-
ther, and they that stode in contention
with him, were wise men, and garnished
with singular giftes of God . In þ whole
sunne

summe of godlinesse thei agreed wonderfull well. They taught, as it were with one mouth, which was the right and sincere worshippinge of God: to purge the same from innumerable superstitions & Idolatries, & to set it from mens leude gloses, was theyr whole endeuour. Quert how yung the affiance in workes, where with miserable men were made dzonken and altogither bewitched, they taught that al Saluation was layde vp in the grace of Chziste. The powze of Chziste which eyther had bene cast vnder fote, or els laye dzowned, they nobly aduanced againe. Which is the true order of callinge vpon God, what is the operation and nature of Repentance, wherof faith springeth, and what fruites it bringeth forth, whiche is the lawfull gouernement of the Church, they teache without any variablenesse at all. Onely in the Sacraments there was some disagreeemēt. And yet I dare auouch this without rashnesse, that vnlesse theyr mindes had bene partly erasperate with ouermuch earnestnesse of the contentions, and partly filled with wzonge suspitions, the controuerisie was not so greate, but
that

John Caluine concerninge

that it might easely haue bene rectified.
But if in that heate of disputation, the
controuerſie could not be diſcuſſed order-
ly as it ſhoulde be, what letteth nowe at
leaſt wiſe, but that the turmoyle beyng
pacified, the ſimple truth ſhould be heard?
We agree very well amonge vs vpo the
true vſe of the Sacramentes. We do all
in generall affirme that the Sacraments
were for this purpoſe inſtituted, to ſeale
vp the promiſes of God in our hartes, to
be furtherers of our fayth, and to be wit-
neſſe of Goddes grace: we aduiſedly ſhew
that they are not emptie or naked & dead
figures: ſeyng that the vſe of the through
the power of the holy Ghoſt is effectually,
and that God by the ſecrete working of
the ſame holy Ghoſt, doth truly perſorme
whatſoeuer he thereby declareth. And
therefore we confeſſe that the Bread and
Wine in the Supper of our Lorde, are
not emptie pawns or tokens of the Co-
mmunion, whiche the faithfull haue with
Chriſte theyr head: becauſe our ſoules en-
ioye him as their ſpirituall foode. Of all
theſe y doctrine is agreeable in all places.
What ſo great ſtublingblocke do proud
men

men finde in this behalfe, that shoulde stoppe by the way of the Gospell: But in defining the way, the maner is somewhat diuers. I cōfesse surely that all mē speake not so distinctly as were to be wished: either bicause euery man hath not the like gifte to dispute plainely and clēerely, or els bicause that all haue not attained one measure of faith. Whereas there remaineth as yet much of the thicke darknesse of the Papistrie, if it be troublesome to any man to haue it narrowly and plainely set forth, whatsoeuer maketh to the discussing of the darknesse of theyr errors, he betrayeth him selfe to be a malicious shunner of the light. Now whiles we lift men from the earth to heauen: while we carry the from dead elementes to Christ, bicause we ascribe the cause of rightuousnesse, saluation, and all good thinges to his mere grace: while we ascribe to the holy Ghost al the efficacie of the signes or Sacramentes: & like as God is the onely authour and performer of spirituall life, we chalenge wholly vnto him that which is his owne: while we reiect al grosse glosses, wherewith it is manifest that the

wo:ldē hath bene deluded; while we take away the carnall maner of Christes presence, and the peruerse worshipping of him in the Sacrament: They that make a stumbling blocke thereof, for asmuch as they wittingly and willingly stumble at Christe, they are worthe to crush themselves together. I haue proued in this case, that there are many which take delight to p̄fende Offences, because it pleaseth them to be blinde in the light.

Moreouer, that whiche I haue briefly touched before, is to be called to remembrance, that although alteration of things do minister occasion of many faultes: yet euery thinge is wonte to be noted more narrowly, and to be founde faulte with more streightly, if ought be then amisse: than if no alteration had happened at all. How deepe a goulfe of ignorance was in the Papistrie, howe horrible the miste of their errours was, it maketh vs astonied to remember. It was a great miracle of God, that Luther and others that labored with him in restorynge the doctrine of godlinesse, could by little and little wade out of it. Diuers do cauilt that they are
offen.

offended, and come not to the Gospell, or
els procede not in theyr race already be-
gonne, bicause they haue not seene all
thinges at one instāt: and bicause so high
a piece of worke was not polished euery
inche of it at the first daye, who seeth not
howe excessive this deintinesse is? For
thei do in likewise, as if a man should ac-
cuse vs, that at the first dawnyng of the
day, we do not yet see the none Sunne.
Nothyng is more common than these co-
plaintes, why was not exactly prescribed
vnto vs by and by, what it behoued vs to
followe: why was this hidden more than
other thinges? shall there be any ende at
all, if it be suffered from time to time to
proceede any further? Undoubtedly they
that talke so, do either enuie that the ser-
uauntes of God shoulde profite, or els it
grieueth them y the kingdome of Chryste
is promoted to better & better. The same
waywardnesse appeareth in euery small
trifle: whiche although they deserue not
to be so lightly pardoned: yet they ought
not to exasperate vs in such sorte that we
should lothe the Gospell. Let the Pharisees
& other Pastors of the popish Synagoge
b v bable

bable neuer so vnſauetie old wiues tales,
let them deſorme the Scripture with ne-
uer ſo abſurde gloſes: and theſe good men
can finde in their hartes to beare with all
this. But if any thinge happen to paſſe
from any of our ſort not ſo aptly applied,
they alledge that they are kept from hea-
ryng vs, as it were by ſome heynous Of-
fence, odious to God and man. They pa-
tiētly beare with wreſtinge the testimo-
nies of the Scriptures, with ſentēces il-
lauoredly hangynge togiſther, and with
frivolous reaſons in their olde wyters:
But if they finde the hundzeth parte in
the writyngeſ of our men, they will not
onely condemne vs all which ſhalbe gilt-
leſſe, but alſo they will counte the whole
doctrīne to be worſthie to be abſteyned
fro. Neuertheleſſe I doe not here take vpo-
me the cace of ſuch as by ſcriblynge doe a-
laye their owne itche. For it is to be wiſ-
ſhed, that ſuch as are of that ſorte, ſhould
giue ouer blurryng of paper. But euē as
I graunt not that the ſcolliſhe toyſes of a
fewe are partially to be cheriſhed: euē ſo
all men ſee how vnrighful a thinge it is,
that for wearineſſe hereof, all the whole
doctrīne

doctrine of the Gospel should be made vnsauerie. It is vndoubtedly true that I haue saide befoze, that in the middes of the light of the Gospell, are more clærely perceiued the thinges that erst lay hidde in the darke night. But to winke willingly & carelesly at all maner of faultes in the one partie, whereas in the other ye searche ouer narrowly for thinges to carpe at: I say is the propertie of one that desirously soueteth & forgeth to him selfe stüblingblockes. For the Offence whiche is ministred to thē by the liuinge of some not corresponsdnt to theyr profession, groweth not vpon any other ground. If the life of them onely which boaste themselves to be folowers of the Gospel were corrupt and dissolute, the cause of their Offence might be deemed more beautifull. But seying that wickednesse floweth generally, almoste through the whole worlde, what shall we saye, but that that olde complainte of the Poete dothe well agré to our age also. The age of our parentes worse than the time of our graundfathers, hath engendred vs lewder than themselves, who ere it be lōge shall leane

Iohn Caluine concerninge

a moze sinfull offspringe after vs . And to what purpose pertaineth that warnynge of Chziste: that the latter age shal be like the time of Noe, and that there shalbe an horrible floudde of iniquitie , wherewith the earth shoulde be ouerwhelmed , but that such a poole of wickednesses, shoulde sharpen the desire of hastinge, to suche as of theyr owne accorde are makinge haste towarde Chziste? For this purpose maketh also (as I saide befoze) the iuste punishment for despisinge the Gospell. For they that haue abused so holy a treasure, who can denie but they haue deserved, that the Lorde should cast them into a reprobate minde , to geue ouer themselves to all kinde of wickednesse . And it is not otherwise to be hoped, but that me should euerywhere moze & moze ware Heathen like, of whome we see fewe free from this sacriledge . Howbeit , I adde another cause to these causes aboue sayd: namely, that they are malicious and wrongefull iudges, whome the vices of men do driue from the Gospell . They say howe diuers do behaue themselves neither godly nor bonestly , whiche glozy in the Gospell .
But

But this question shoulde haue bene demanded of them first, whether the Gospell chaūged them to the worse: He that was a whozemonger (say they) or a dicer, or other wise dissolute of liuynge, is the same man he was still at this daye. Weresly the vices which in Papistrīe they beare with, they beginne to detest so sodeinly, that for hatred of them they abhorre the very doctrine of holynesse and innocēcie. I feare not, that they whiche by their filthy & wicked life, do dishonour the Gospell, should thinke me to be their patrone. And therefore (I suppose) I shall haue the more libertie to rebuke them, that impute all the corruptnesse of the Papacie to the Gospell. If there be any holinesse there, the Monkes, by consent of them all, do challenge it to them without all controuerisie. And why shoulde they not? when in their Cloysters is resident an angel: call perfection. But for all that, we haue not from any other place a more filthy puddle of all vices. If any mā will replie, that since from thence onely come Antipopes, it is no maruell if they sende forth their kinde wheresoeuer they be come:

come: it is an easie matter for me to wash
away such a friuolous slander. For first
and foremost if any goodnesse were there,
it is most certaine, that by the wonderful
prouidence of God it was brought out,
as golde should be brought out of a dug
hill. What Monkes had Germanie in our
age, that eyther in doctrine or holinesse,
may be bolde to compare themselves with
Luther, Bucér, Oecolampadius and suche
like, onlesse they do it without all respect
of shame: whome shall the Italians set a
gaynst Bernardine Ochine, or Peter Ver
mill: Also out of the Cloisters of Fraunce
there issued diuers, who with their
brightnesse might haue shadowed many
reproches and shames of their order. I
confesse there were but fewe that turned
from their Monkerie vnto vs, who are
woorthie to be named for honours sake.
And what wonder is it though many An
gels come not out of Hell. In that onely
Loth of all the Sodomites escaped aliué,
we do woorthely attribute it to the excel
lent power of God. But what Sodom e
uer was there fraughted with so many
monsters of filthinesse, as swarme at this
days

day in the denues of Monkes: And therefore am I wonte to say: if the tenth parte of them that fleete thence vnder the name of Christianitie, doe giue theselues truly to Christe, the world goeth very well on our side. But rather we dayly see Christe defrauded of his tenthes: in so much that scarce the twentieth parte commeth to his share. Suche of them as giue occasion of Offence, I say not that they are so muche lewde of nature, and ill spokē of for their owne faultes, as hated for their filthie & wicked trayninge vpon in Monkerie. For in that thei be slouthful bellies, & scoldes, and falseharted, and vnthankfull, and vnnurtred, and busibodies, and filchers, and of slauiſhe nature, and lecherous, doe not all these thinges smell of their Cloyster trade of liuing: Every seuerall order hath seuerall rules sequestred and distinct one from another: howbeit the common rule well néere of them all, is patched together of those vertues whiche I haue rehearsed. For if the best whiche God hath drawē out of that myrie, doe acknowledge the skurfe that they haue taken, to sticke so faste by them, that they must labour

hour from daye to daye in twippinge away
the refuse: a mā may iudge how soze the
the infection reigneth amonge the cōmon
sorte. Then let those, whome suche kinde
of Offences hinder, receiue that is their
owne, and they shal finde the way plaine
& leuell. Surely if I were a magistrate,
and that I had sufficient goodes to main-
teine the charges thereof, I would neuer
set at libertie a Monke new crepte out of
his denne, vnder halfe a yēeres triall at
the least, and that shoulde be thorowly
done to, ere he should vse the cōmon trade
of liuyng and societie of men: and as ma-
ny as I sawe clad still in their Monkish
wæde, I woulde either shut them vp in
prisons, or els sende them away as vnru-
ly beastes into some wilde forrest. More-
ouer to washe from the Papacie, the fil-
thinesse whiche is knowen to be proper
vnto it, and to laye them vpon the name
of the Gospell, is a point of to much flaū-
derousnes. But why doe I dispute of one
kinde? For if the Papists object to vs the
dissolute liuyng and scarce honest beha-
viour of a fewe men, we maye of as good
righte and better, retorne the same and
greater

greater reproches by double vpon them. Would God they gaue vs not so plentiful matter. It is to no purpose to tel how freely whozedom reigneth among them without punishment: what libertie there is of scoldynge and quarrelyng: howe all kinde of wantonnesse is permitted commonly: with how great reioycemēt reigne amonge them lawlesse pompes, vnchaste dauncinges, and other thinges of the same sorte. Surely there is none of all these thinges, whiche (that I may glozy after a sober maner) is not prohibited among vs by publicke proclamacions, & restrained by some discipline. Wherefore it is not to be feared, if we be cōpared with the Papistes, that we should be founde fully as illfaouored as they. When we remember our euill doynges, there is cause why we should be greatly ashamed. But (which is a thinge to be lamented,) they extream filthinesse maketh vs to seeme almost good and vndefiled men. It is a wonder therefore that they, who are so cōp in bearing with the vices of our mē, should be scelerbated in sufferynge the wickednesses of the cōtrarie part. Wherin they not onely

do vs wronge, but also are most vnthak-
full to God. For in the meane time they
passe ouer very many examples of rare
godlinesse, holinesse, & all other vertues:
whereby it became them rather to be pro-
uoked to the loue and reuerent feare of
the Gospell, than for the faultes of some
to be moued to hatred or contempt of it.
They alledge that not many amended,
since they professed the Gospell. But I
pray you, how many may we bring forth
of the contrarie parte, whose wonderfull
conuerſion dothe beautifie our Gospell?
And ſeynge they enforce vs to gloryng,
which ſo maliciously do darken the glory
of the Gospell, there is no region whiche
doth not dayly beholde princely triumphes
of our doctrine in this behalf. The aduer-
ſaries themſelues alſo, although they diſ-
ſemble it, yet are they ready to burſte for
madneſſe, becauſe they ſee men, who here-
tofore were giuen to riotte, wantonneſſe,
unchaſtneſſe, vaine pompes of the world,
couetouſneſſe, & rauin, nowe wholly fra-
med to ſoberneſſe, temperance, chaſtite,
modeltie, and vpſight dealinge. And if
they ſeeke at our handes for ſuch as haue
ledde

ledde the whole processe of theyr life continually in vertue and glorious fame, we are not destitute of a very great number of suche. I could name a great sorte, who excellinge sometime with high comendacion in the Papistrie, do now liethens they were endewed by God with pure knowledge of his Gospel, by expressing the liuely image of vertue in their life, thewe theselues to haue had no more but a shadow of it before. But least this talke may for some appearance of boastyng be odious, I will conclude shortly. If the examples both of men & women do througfly moue any bodie: singular godlynesse testified as well in death as life, vprightnesse, chastitie, and temperance, ought to be much more auailable towarde the confirmation of the faith, than it were meete that the disordered life of othermen should anoye it.

Now let vs passe to the laste sorte of Offences: which I saide to consist partly of surmised slaunders, & partly to spring of malicious canillations, which frowarde me fetchyng a farre of, do vniustly wrest vpon the Gospel. Of slaunders I purpose

If

to

Iohn Caluine concerninge

to speake this befoze: that is no maruell if
letwde persones by spreadyng them farre
abzoade, endeuour to ouerthrowe the
credite of our doctrine amōge the simple.
Foz it is not conuenient that we shoulde
be exempted from the common law of the
seruauntes of God. Surely Baule was
not so waywarde to make those com-
plaintes foz nothinge, whiche are to be
seene euerywhere in his wrytynges. Ma-
ny thyngs, of his wisdom he suppressed
with silence: many thynges, of his mode-
stie he did forgiue: many thynges, of his
noble courage he swallowed vp and sayd
nothyng: and yet we see how often he co-
playneth that he was spightfully flander-
ed through the congregacions. I speake
of sinistre backebitynges, wherewith ma-
licious persones did burthen him, beyng
absent & knowynge not of it, befoze per-
sones to light of credite, vnskilfull of all
thynges, and ignorant of the truthe. Foz
it is to well known how the seruauntes
of God, yea & the Sonne of God too, haue
with open flanders bene openly assaul-
ted. But the Deuill when he seeth he can
profite nothing by open assault, assaileth
the

the good name of the godly pꝛiuelly, as it
were by mynes. Wherefore when Paule
was goynge of his harde souldierfare in
countries farre of: when through a thou
sande daungers he endeuored to enlarge
the kingdome of Chꝛiste: hauinge conti
nuall conflicts with sundꝝ enemies, rꝛu
nyng eithꝛer hither and thither of purpose & de
sire to gather natiōs farre distant asun
der, into the vnitie of the faith: cowardly
and currish whisperers burdened him be
hinde his backe with vnderfained slan
ders. Whiche of vs maye require to haue
his good name vntouched of all ꝑ snatch
ynges of wicked men, seying that Paules
purenesse of liuinge was not able to de
fende him: Yea rather (as he witnesseth
him selfe to haue done) let vs goe through
with vnapalled courage by infamie or
good name. For it is no lesse behouefull
for the seruauntes of Chꝛiste, to set light
by slanderous reportes: than to be free
fro the enticementes of vaine gloꝛie. For
Sathan by burthenyng thē with wrong
full misdeemynges, taketh eꝑther to
bꝛeake, or (at leastwise) to hinder the
cheerfulnesse in doyng well. But like

as it is nothinge conuenient y^e we should
be moued out of our standynge, as often
as we are ill spoken of for doynge well:
so they are not troubled but by their owne
faulte, who in admittynge whisperinges
and false accusations doe shewe theselues
to light of beliefe. Howe many thinges
did the enemies of Luther surmise & in-
uent vpon him, bothe in sermons & booke
that they put forth, by the space of whole
fue & twentie yeres together: There are
nolies so prodigious which they durst not
forge and blaste out against vs. Picart a
doutor of Paris, a man of a troublesome
brayne, and therewithall frenlike, (but
yet of such estimation amonge his owne
sort, that al his olde wiues tales are coun-
ted for Oracles,) as he playde the dronke
bedlem, accordynge to his custome in the
pulpit, was so bolde to say, that we vtter-
ly denied there was any God. Andoubt-
edly he is not ignorant y^e he lieth shame-
fully: but for asmuche as such men are pur-
posed and bente to assaulte vs by any
meanes that may be, they thinke the law
in their owne handes, to blab out against
vs, whatsoeuer may cause vs to be beha-
ved.

ted. And surely seying they know as well
as maye be, that they are destitute of all
reason, (but if they make the miserable
people as very doltes as themselves:) it
is no maruell that they are compelled of
necessitie to abuse that for a shifte. How-
beit whatsoeuer it pleaseth them to sur-
mise, yea euen without colour, ought not
forthwith to obtaine so greate credite.
But it is so ordinarie, that it is counted
for lawfull. If I shoulde make reherfall
how many absurde & childishe toyes they
haue deuised of me: it were daunger leaſt
I shoulde wrappe my selfe in theyr folies.
I saye no more but this: if there be suche
lawe determined against vs, that y more
vnbzyled and vnshamefast our enemies
be to belie vs, so much shoulde the case of
the Gospell be the worſe, and so muche of
the credite thereof shoulde be abated: there
is no cause why so wzongful iudges may
cōplaine, that stumblingblockes are caste
in their waye, whiche they shewe to be a
thinge of their owne voluntarie ſeekyng:
and we may safely saye with Paule: he
that is ignozāt, let him be ignozant still.

I come to another spice of backbit yng,

L iij

whiche

John Caluine concerninge

whiche not onely cometh out of the same
workhouse of Sathan, but also is forged
almost vpon the same stithie. This onely
difference there is, that those former, of
whome I haue spoken, beyng open and
sworne enemies, do diffame the Gospell
in their ministers to the people: and these
of whome I purpose to speake hereafter,
do so winde themselues in, vnder the
name of the Gospell, that neuerthelesse
by ouerthwart murmuringe, they with-
draue as many as thei can from Christe.
These are partely hungerstozuen vaga-
bondes, whiche will ouerwhelme thee
with carteloades of slaunders, if thou cram
not full theyr gorges: and partly naugh-
tie lewde fellows, who being dispatched
from our companie for their owne fault,
or els depriued of some office for ill do-
yng, hunte for a new liuyng in another
corner: and yet bothe sortes of them haue
theyr mindes and togues in their bellie.
Othersome, beinge a little more deintie,
as not so much pinched with hunger, and
yet shunning the Crosse, to the entent to
haue a cloke for theyr cowardlinesse, do
ouerloade the pure doctrine of the Gospell
with

with fables, feined by themselves. I sayd
a little before howe there are a great nū-
ber of Dyanes that roue abroad, to gette
somewhat by pilferie, or by deceite. Such
beyng now so knowe by their owne pac-
kinges, that they can finde place no more
to beguile folke in y^e Churches of Christer:
departinge aside some otherwhere, do
power out any thinge they can imagine
against vs impudently, to the entent to
get themselves fauour, by bzingynge vs
in hatred with the vnskillfull. But what
will those good men prescribe vs, whiche
conceiue cause of Offence vpon their va-
nitie. We see asseheaded Monkes, who yet
were wont to stuffe the paunche, that if
ye cram not meate into their mouthes,
by and by they were fite to sanctifie bat-
tell (as the Prophete termeth it.) We see
others also not vnlike the Monkes. They
promise all to become halfe Angelles, so
they may happen vpo a measurable trade
of liuinge, sayinge they wilbe contented
with bread and water. But that same
bragge of sufferance, anone after vanis-
sheth into smoke. And they themselves
after they haue within a while giuen a

prose of their slouthfulnesse, beinge weary of worke, steale priuely awaye. I confesse, that many haupng desired a state of liuinge in vaine, (as it must needes come to passe, where many come flockinge to aske at ones) doe departe. And I am not harde to beleue, but that some are not so liberally helped, who notwithstandinge were moze woorthy of reliefe: either because in men vnknownen so exact choyse can not be had, or els because those that be the bolder sorte in crauinge, take vp the place befoze the fearefull and shamefaste doe come: or because we doe not ever iudge rightly, or because that beyng neere spent with giuinge out, we are compelled to sende away either eniptie, or at leastwise slenderly relieued, suche as come out of season. And yet such as should haue some what moze colour, haue also come fieldo'mer, and speake moze gently. The complaints of the other sorte sitte abroad euerywhere. And what maner of ones be they: Bespzed with most monstrous lies. Howbeit muche moze letwedly doe they rayle, whiche beinge either dzruen hence for their misbehauour, or dzawen hence by

by false rentyng, do haue for the fauour
of richemen by flaunderous meanes, to
the entet to fill their maw with likkyng
their disshes. For this is not hidden, that
there are many founde which would de-
sire to haue the Gospell quiet for them,
and free fro all trouble: when as they are
ashamed to confesse the truthe, howe the
feare of the Crosse doth let them that thei
cannot satisfie the Christian profession.
If there be any vices in the Churches of
Christe, they couet to enquyre them out,
that they may not seeme tied to their nest
without cause. Merely (saye they) if in vs
be reprehended clokinge of Idolatrie, in
other places also is neuerthelesse comit-
ted offence diuers wayes. And still they
seeke pretence by their lies, whiche it is
moste certaine to be forged by suche var-
letttes, in fauour of them. It liketh me to
alledge briefly two or thre examples, to
the entent that hereafter no man be de-
ceiued, except it be wittingly & willing-
ly. There was one Cortese minister of
the worde in the countie of Monsbergard:
who beinge driuen from thence, went to
Neoconium: where findyng colder enter-
tainement

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fainement than he hoped for, to the entet
he might reuenge him selfe, beinge fur-
thered with the helpe of certaine like him
selfe, he did many and great displeasures
to the godly bzethzen. Howbeit findinge
him selfe at length discouraged, he craued
forgiuenesse humbly (which is an ordina-
rie with those fores) and through his de-
ceitefull pretence of repentance, he not
onely pacified the displeased bzethzen,
but also at such time, as he fained him self
to be doubtfull in certaine questions, ob-
teyned their letters vnto me, wherein
they desired me friendly, that I woulde
goe about to resolue him. I entertaynyng
the man at mine owne table, hearde him
patiently: in so muche that with aboun-
dance of teares he affirmed al scruples to
be nowe voyded from him. At his depar-
ture also I gaue him wherewith to beare
his charges by the waye. From that time
forth gaddinge ouer all Fraunce, he cea-
sed not to speake euill of me like a lewde
fellow. Another I knowe not of what
countrey (who had giuen him self a name
of the Coznell tre,) beyng accused to
haue done diuers thinges vnseemely for
the

the seruant of Christ, was by the iudgement of the conuocation of Lausan, commaunded to suspende his ministerie, vntill his case were tried better. Anone after as he carried letters to Berue, suspectinge they were not made as he would wish, he deliuered other of his owne counterfettinge: and vnderstandyng that his lewdenesse was founde out, bicause he coulde not washe his handes of the matter, he tooke his heeles into another quarter. And all these thinges were done in mine absence without my knowledge. Nowe he reporteth euery where that I draue him out by force, bicause he refused to subscribe to mine Heresies. Another who was to great a tauerne hunter, beinge sharply rebuked by me, neuer lefte feastyng and banquettinge by skelth, vntill he was runne very soze in dette: where leauinge his householde he crept priuely away. I was gone of a iourney to Argentine. There was betwene vs no variace, no suspition of Offence, but that I had a while bene a let that he cast not him selfe away. And bicause he had bene of the couent of the Austine Friers, he walked
by

vp and downe befoze their denne, declaring lamentably that he was banished, because that he also had withstood my Heresies. But I doe not so much passe for the lewdnesse of him & suche as he is, as this vnworthinesse grieueth me, that the good Fathers, who dayly learne out of our Bookes, doe not sticke in steade of rewarde vs, to charge vs with the offences which they haue drawen out of those their owne puddels. But I play the scoule in busynge both my selfe and the Readers, in gathering these huskes together: but that it behoued as it were to be represented in the persones of a fewe, what is wonte to be done of most men euery where and dayly. Towarde some we are to rough & vnappeasable. But it were good to know what maner of Clemencie they require at our handes: we being wrongfully hurte doe forgive, and take no reuengement, though it be in our hande to doe it. This is not inoughe for them: but they will mozeouer be receiued into our bosomes, none otherwise than if they had alwaies bene most faithfull vnto vs: what a thing is this? That beinge deceiued, betrayed, and

and cruelly misused, we shoulde not be bolde to looke to our selues afterwarde. But it repenteth them. Merely, being very Crocodiles, they will with one little teare purchase credite of goodnesse. This therfore, is that our vncourtuous rigour, that we doe not wilfully yelde our selues to the to cut our throttes. But I let passe to speake of our priuate iniuries. God shalbe greatly offended: an open faulte & of very ill example shalbe committed, yea and some shall heape wickednesse vpon wickednesse: beinge conuicted they confesse one halfe of the faulte themselves. And yet when they haue confessed, if all thinges be not in as good state with them as if they had neuer done amisse, they crie out, that by our rigorousnesse they are driuen to despayre. I say that repentance beyng so holy a thing, cannot be esteemed vpon colde signes. To goe further with them, what repentance boast they of, who are so smallly humbled with the acknowledging of theyr faulte, that within three daies after they dare with a brassen face vaunt themselves in the pulpit: It was the fallshion of Monkes to keepe secrete what

what wickednesse so euer was in theyr
fellowes for reuerence of their order. Ma-
ny woulde wishe that this custome were
brought into the Church of Christe. But
I holde opinion that there can no better
prouiso be made for y^e honour of the Chri-
stian name, than if the Temple of God be
cleane purged from filthinesse.

But nowe I haue spent to many
woordes in repeating the flanders, wher-
with suche varlets as are departed from
amonge vs, doe thzough my sides ouer-
thwartly wounde the Gospell: I returne
againe to the generall flanders, where-
with the manifest and sworne enemies
doe opely assault the doctrine. This is the
flander most frequented amonge them:
that we vnder pretence of Christian li-
bertie, doe set free all thinges at the luste
of our selues and of other men: and that
our doctrine tendeth to none other ende,
but that men beinge loosened from lawe,
& awe, shoulde take theyr pleasure with-
out measure or modestie. What our doc-
trine containeth, large volumes are able
to shewe. But ye may vnderstand that it
is as free for our enemies to lie, before
them

them that are kepte from readinge our
writinges, as it is superfluous for vs to
make excuse befoze the Readers. Neuer-
thelesse, first I woulde know what yoke
of discipline it is a Gods name, that is so
griuous, that it cōpels vs to flie to this
sanctuarie. For the rigorousnesse of the
Papacie was neuer yet so great, but that
it was lawfull there to goe a whozehun-
tinge, to daūce, to excede vnmeasurably
in all riottousnesse, to feast and banquet,
to play at dice, and by all meanes to vse
misbehauour thzough the whole yēere:
condicionally that once after yēerely par-
don, those that had liued so lewdly, dis-
charged their stomacke into the Masse-
mongers eare, as it were by vomittinge
after a surfet. To what purpose thē was
it, to seeke this last remedie of despayze,
in suche dissolute licētiousnesse? Certein-
ly if there were any, neuer so desirous of
alteration, yet they neuer began to make
a do, befoze they were past all hope of cō-
passinge theyz desire otherwise. Powe
there coulde not any vnruely or wanton
desire haue tickled vs, whiche might not
haue bene bozne with, vnpunished vnder

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the Papacie. But the blowes abroade of the praise of the Papacie, are too much to be laughed at, while they preache their streight orders of discipline, as if they were the lawes of Sparta. For who wold belæue a Monke with plumpe and ruddie chækes, boasting of his fastinge: who cā thinke that they are sparinge, who are euerywhere knowen to be drowned in ruffianrie? To conclude in one worde, almosse all the popishe Clergie, is a wide sinke of all kindes of wickednesse, which doth not onely breath out his stinch farre and wide, but dothe also infect with his deadly venim all other orders or degrees of the worlde. But admit we graunt that all thinges are ordered holply and chastly amonge them. Yet for that thei say we loosen and set at large the chastitie of manners, which men were streightly bounde vnto by their lawes: I will appeale to none other wittnesse, for the disprouinge of this lie, than those whiche are dayly quarelynge with vs, complayninge that al their olde libertie is taken from them. I will saye nothinge but that whiche is thoroughly knowen to all men. As many
amonge

amonge vs as being lecherous, riottouse,
or lewde, couet to doe as they liste, ye
should saye they be the very Souldiers of
the Pope hyred to assaulte the Gospell.
Peyther dissemble they the cause, that
they cannot away with this auncient and
sadde seueritie (as they terme it,) whiche
earst lay hidde in olde forwozne papers.
The rage of these men at leastwise were
to be pacified, to the entent these good de-
fenders of chastitie might perswade that
we giue the fleashe as muche libertie as it
will craue. But for asmuch as they kicke
and spurne so much against our rigorou-
nesse, to whom the discipline of Papistrie
was swæte and delectable, it may be easie
for any man to gather hereby, that our
doctrine is farre wide frō that vnbridled
partialitie, whereof they accuse it. Hæve
rather many of the Papistes doe aggra-
uate this spight vpon our doctrine, that it
taketh almost all mirth and gladnesse out
of the worlde.

Three thinges specially they object a-
gainst vs: wherein they accuse vs to couet
a licentiousnesse of doyng what we list.
Bicause we haue abrogated auricular co-
fession:

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cession : bicause forbiddinge of meates is condemned : & bicause we make free vnto all men the vse of Mariage. Thei crie out that shamesfastnesse is taken out of the worlde, but if the necessitie of confessinge bziidle it. Merely it is a wonderous thinge that the spirite of God, neither in the old Church, nor of many ages after Chzistes comminge, did vse this bzydle. Shall we then say, that all that time wated shamefastnesse, when holynesse, chastitie, and all vertues flozished chiefly : Albeit the rigour of discipline were at that time exceedinge sharpe, yet notwithstandinge there was not this bzydle, without the whiche these good patrones of modestie thinke nothinge should be in saultie. But it is most false whiche they boaste of, that the lustes of men are hereby restrayned. For who seeth not, that in like maner as drunken men doe ease themselves by vomit, to the entent that anone after, as if they were fresh and fastyng they may returne to glutting themselves newe againe: Euen so the Papistes vtter their secrete whispringes into the Priestes eare, to the entent that beyng lightened of theyr former

former fardell, they maye more boldely heape sinne vpon sinne. They pretende by their wordes, to cōfesse themselues to God. But I saye it is the common intent of them all, to disclose their priuities co- uertly to the Priest, to the entent they may be hidden from God and man. And therefore we see that after they are dispatched of their theauishe mumbling, they follow theyr lustes farre more carelesly than before. But let vs graunt them that some are so kept in awe with that slavish feare, that they absteyne from sinning: yet inferre they slaunderously vpon vs, that we seeke fleshly libertie in this behalfe. We condēne the lawe of Innocent, whiche bindeth the consciences with the necessitie, from which God absolueth and setteth free. Let them reason the matter with God, who so precisely forbiddeth that any man shoulde snarle him selfe in suche snares, or suffer the soules whiche Christe hath redeemed with his blood, to be snarled. We say it proceeded of trayterous boldnesse, y the Remission of sinnes was bounde to the device of man. If we cannot auouche vnto Christe, his right &

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honour, otherwise than by takinge vpon
vs this reproche whiche they charge vs
with: it is verely the greatest honour to
vs that maye be. Assuredly they are per-
uerse & lewde, which thereupon conceiue
cause of Offence. For the takinge awaye
of difference of meates, the excuse is rea-
die and easie to make. They say that the
raine is let lose to the flesh to waite wa-
ton intemperately, bicause it is permit-
ted to cate flesh as well vpon the friday
as the monday. As who would say, there
were no riot or excelsse, saue in eatinge of
flesh. Furthermoze, who knoweth not,
that alwaies the deintiest fare hath ever
bene of fishe: and that at this day, the kit-
chens neuer smooke better, nor the tables
are more busily laide, or furnished with
more plentie and varietie, than vpon fishe-
daies: Awaye with those toyes: that we
allure simple soules with delicacies. For
the question in variance betwene vs is
not of delicate meates. But the Papistes,
whereas they can with al their hartes suf-
fer the gull to be gluttred vpon the friday
with all superfluitie and sweetnesse of
meates, (flesh onely excepted:) affirme it
vnlawe

vnlawfull to touche porke oz beofe : & we
 leaue to euery mans conscience the liber-
 tie that God hath graunted . Therefore
 we dare determine , that there is no moze
 religiō in vile in wardes of beastes , than
 in a fishe sumptuously sauced . Surely a
 spare and sober diet , as becōmeth vs , we
 commende : neither shall any man finde
 that our wrytynges oz sermons doe euen
 thus muche beare with excesse . But ra-
 ther euery side of a leafe of our wrytyngs
 shall witnesse with vs , that we are some-
 what aboue the Papistes in enforcinge
 men to temperance . And takinge away
 the superstition of the day , we teach that
 it is lawfull to vse sparsely and thristely ,
 such things as by Gods benefite we haue
 in store . What sweetenesse of libertie is
 there so great herein , that it shoulde in-
 force vs to turne y^e world upside downe ?
 Surely if I were minded to delight my
 mouth , I would for one halfe yēre , chōse
 me other maner of meates rather than
 fleash . My acquaintance know I am very
 much delighted in fish , and certeine other
 thinges , frō which I willingly abstaine ,
 least I shoulde bie my delicates with the

losse of my health. I confesse it is a fondnesse, to confute suche slender slaunders. But my Readers must beare with me, if in settinge my selfe against Offences, I play the foole a little. Wherefoze it needeth not to farrie any lengar, about these toyes. For this part of doctrine whiche I intreate of, consisteth of two members. We vpholde that it is vnlawfull for the consciences to be entangled with mans lawes, which should be ruled by the onely woꝛde of God. Although that nothing were moze profitable than this kinde of exercise: yet notwithstandinge we say it is a wicked boldnesse, when men make a lawe to binde the soules with an inward feare. For God chalengeth this right to him selfe alone, that he be our laweginer and our Judge. Therwithal we say, that extreame wronge is done vnto Christe, while y libertie purchaced with his bloud, is brought to nothinge. For by his benefite we are so muche in better cace than the people of the old lawe, in that we are set frée from obseruatiō of dayes & choyce of meates. Furthermore, with Paule we denie that the kingdome of God consisteth
in

in meate and drinke : and therefore that men are deceiued by an euill superstitiō, when they take abstinence from flesh to be a part of holinesse. Finally, we do no thinge but subscribe vnto Paule, who plainly affirmeth it to be a Diuelish doctrine, to forbidde meates as vncleane, whiche God hath hallowed to mans vse, that he maye eat freely of them with thanks giuyng. Of no Offence ought to be had so great regarde, that it should be lawfull to hide in silence things so needefull to be knowen.

But yet this crime is not altogether washed away, in asmuche as our aduersaries brag that we can abide no fastyng, the whiche our Lord every where highly commendeth. Firste, for asmuche as our Bookes and sermons do crie out against this slander, we neede to labour the lesse in confutinge the same. But they wil replie vpon vs, that we haue disanulled the decrees that were longe agoe stablished for fastinge. I confesse so, & that we were compelled thereto for very earnest and weightie causes, so that they deale very lewdely with vs, in imputinge to vs as a

¶ v faulte,

faulke, a thinge godlily and iustly taken
in hande. It was belcued vpo an olde for-
wozne opinion, that the Lenton fast pro-
ceeded of the institution of Christe. This
errorr is light to seemyng, but yet an er-
rorr in deede, and suche a one, as is in no
wise to be borne withall. It is an easie
matter to showe without any trouble,
how foolishly and vnsauozly it was deu-
ised, and how rashly it was belcued. For
if Christe would by his example allure vs
to a ycerely faste, why did he it but ones
in all his life, and not ycerely? why did he
not by & by stablish the custome amonge
his Disciples? why did not the Apostles
immediatly after his resurrection keepe it
as a rule prescribed of their maister? And
why should we more followe the faste of
Christe, than the olde people the faste of
Moyles? which of the Prophetes or faith-
full men, tooke example at Moyles to do
the like? now put to that other parte: na-
mely that it is suche an errorr, as cannot
be winked at, without great domage to
our faith. No man doubteth but that the
doctrine of the Gospell was sealed with
that miracle, to the entent the authoritie
thercol

therof should be the certainer. And therefore the Euangelicall historie reporteth, that Christe was not a hungred by the space of xl. daies. That which Christe did by the power of his Godhead, to the entet to ex't the reuerence of his doctrine aboue mans reache, while the Papistes couenter the same as if it were subiect to theyr owne power, doe they not (as much as in them lieth) darken the wonderfull power of Christe, & cancell that holy seale wherewith the truthe of the Gospell was ratified? In other fastings we easely shewe, that when men thought they pleased God, they did exhibite a grosse worshippe vnto Idols. In that daies are appointed in honour of whome they should faste. The Scripture condemneth it of wilfull superstition. That they stablish a worship of God therein, and imagine it a meritorious worke, it is not onely a foolish and vaine truste, but also an vtter vngodlinesse. If we folow Paule as our Author, it shalbe lawfull to vs to pronounce in generall, that suche outward exercises wherein the chiefe pointe of godlinesse consisteth not, doe little p'seute. And this cannot

cannot be spoken, but that that precise rigorosnesse of exactinge fast, which reigneth amonge the Papistes, may iustly be condemned, as longe as they permit to neglect necessarie dueties. Wea rather a mā may crie vnto them out of the mouth of our mayster him selfe: O ye Hypocrites, ye haue made the comaundements of God of none effect, for your owne traditions sake: nowe although weightier caces doe moue vs to speake, yet sodeinly they make vs mainteyners of glottonie and all intemperance. And yet the lewdnesse of the, against whome I dispute, is vntworthie to haue so rightfull and earnest a defence made against it. For what lawe I beseeche you, doth the Pope forbid by his fastinges: or rather make for his fastinges: That a man shoulde not taste any meate before noone, and the absteyne from fleash: and to be short that contenting him with his onely dinner, he should that day forbear his Supper. Moreover, this is the vsuall maner, that they fill themselves well the night afore, ere they goe to bedde, to the entent a two howres fastyng may be the more tolerable: that
the

the same daye they faste, because they are allowed no more but onely their dinner, they cramme in as much as their cropes will holde: & that the next day after they take vp their pennyworthes with surfettinge. After they haue so carelesly dalled with God, as if it were with some boye, this also they adde to the heape of their lewdnesse, that the measurable and spare diet is broken by vs. But I saye, that although they be dissolute in al their whole life, yet they no where fall more grossely into a beastly intemperāce, than in their fastinges.

Somewhat also remaineth to be spoken of Mariage. Our aduersaries surmise, that we for womens sakes haue moued as it were the warre of Troie. To the entent I omit others at this present, they must needes graunt, that I at leastwise am free from this slander. By meanes whereof I haue the more libertie to resell their vnlauxie chatteringe. Whereas vnder the Tirannie of the Pope I was alwaies free to take a wife, since the time the Lorde toke me out of it, I haue many yeeres liued a single life. After the death
of

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of my wife, a womā of singular example,
it is now a yēre and a halfe, since I haue
liued a single life againe. These thinges
whiche shall perchaunce seeme to make
little to the purpose, I haue for this con-
sideration spoken by the way, partly that
thereby the malicious vanitie of our ad-
uersaries maye be reprobued: and partly
that all men may beare witnesse I doe not
pleade a priuate case. But what goodnesse
then doe these maintainers of chastitie
bringe? Marrie they say, that Luther and
others beyng stirred thereto by the tick-
lyng of the flesh, haue both giuen them-
selve libertie to marrie, and also drawen
the common sorte of Priestes, Monkes, &
Nonnes into the like allurements. The
thinges whiche might be truely declared
of the chastitie of seuerall persones, whom
they falsely and maliciously diffame, I
passe ouer of set purpose. For what were
more foolish, than for suche to lie out of
the Papistrie as cannot liue chaste? We
maye well thinke there were no libertie
for sacrificinge Priestes, Monkes, and
Nonnes, to fulfill their lustes, onlesse
they sought the a new sanctuarie a great
way

waie of, with theyꝝ great trouble. As though all the Cloisters, Celles, & Fraytries, of the Monkes and Nunnes, did not stinke of all kinde of fornication and uncleannesse. Their prodigious lustes I doe not here touche. But to what purpose is it to dissemble a thinge knowen, as how that from those lurking holes, chastitie & shamesfastnesse, for the most part, were so banished, that the greatest number of them had there some libertie at leastwise, to play the harlottes. What shall I say of the sacrificing Priestes, who are so little ashamed of their lecheries, that it is now a glorious matter for them to set vp remembraunces of the euery where. Surely, that I maye speake moste fauorably, there is no neede at all that muttonmongers should remoue out of the Papistrie. And yet I doe not vtterly denie, but that some Monkes flie out of their cages, to the enient they maye freely amonge vs feede on the laced mutton, whiche there they doe but snatch at by stealth. But I dare take themselues to witnesse, howe great oddes there is betwene mariage, & the voluptuous life whiche they ledde in
their

their lobbies. And therefore diuers, because they by and by smell howe muche streighter the chaste dwellinge togither of man and wife is, thā the popish single life of wiuelesse wantonnesse, doe retyze betimes to theyr owne nestes. Other, some beyng more desperate, flie ouer to Rome or to some other place, whither fortune carrieth them. And this is one of the Angelicall vertues of the Cloysters.

Neuerthelesse, admitte that many doe peruerfly abuse our doctrine: yet it ought to be sene how iuste cause there is of Defence. God hath created mankind vnder this condition, that man should performe the office of a head to the woman, and the woman againe be an helper to the man: and so in a mutuall bonde he knitte bothe the sexes togither. Before man was corrupted, mariage was giuen and permitted to them for a greate benefite. This benefite of God to be wrested from man beyng mortal, I say is not to be suffered. Now vnto the first institution of God, is come a greater necessitie, by reason of incontinencie of the fleashe. For the holy Ghost hath not in vaine by the mouthe of Paule,

Paule, appointed this remedie for the auoydinge of fornication, that euery man should haue his wife, and euery woman also haue her owne husband. Chyriste and the said Paule doe not in vaine giue warning, that all are not apte and meete for single life. And would God the disease of incontinencie were lesse knowen in this our nature growen out of kinde. God, to the entent to remedie this vice, hath not onely ordeined mariage, wherein man may lawfully dwell with woma, but also with lowde voice calleth vnto the lawfull vse thereof, al that are burned of their owne flesh. The Apostles, Martyrs, and other chiefe of the Saints blessed this benefite. A wonderfull estimation of single life arose suddenly, and put mariage quight out of conceit and reputatio. For withstandynge, the abstinence from mariage was but as will for a tyme, untill that superstition set open the gate to Licenche. First therefore were the Priests prohibited mariage, at length the prohibition crepte to the Deacons too. The Monkes and Nunnys, beinge intangled in the snare of their Othe, gaue ouer the

P

right

right that God had graunted them. Here-
upon the worlde beganne to thinke none
hallowed to God, but onely singlefolke.
This cruell furie raged so farre, that they
noted the married life to be very reproch-
full as an vnholly kinde of life. First, al-
though suche a chaunge had had good suc-
cesse to see to, yet we say it had his begin-
nyng of Diuelish audacitie. But the ho-
lier vertue that Chastitie is, so muche the
wickedder and more detestable is forced
singlenesse, whiche is most certaine to be
replenished with all kinde of filthinesse
and vncleannesse. The Papistes extoll
virginitie with wonderfull commenda-
tions, to the entet they may seeme like the
Angels, whosomer abhorreth marriage.
As who should say, they had wone at our
handes, that out of marriage there were
nothyng but all chaste and virginlyke.
But they seeme to haue theyr beds boide
of wines of theyr owne, for this purpose
onely, that they themselves may be occu-
pied in bealyng other mens. For who
knoweth not how it is a common saying
amonge them, that seying a Donke, or a
Priest, is disbarred the right of takyng a
wife

wise as all other men doe, it is good right
and reason he should helpe him selfe some
other way. And to the entet there should
be no default on their parte, almost all of
the follow lustely this kinde of hunting.
There is no fitter pursute for Bawdry
than confession, as wherby they doe not
onely wind into their owne claws, such
wome as are giltye of any misbehaviour,
but also doe assigne them ouer from one
to another, and therefore now the mat-
ter is come to this point, that such as are
contented with Lemans in theyr houses,
are counted amonge the rest to be chaste
and temperate. They praise filthinesse &
vnspeakeable incest, I omit. And surely
I would not meddle with these neyther,
though they be commonly knowen, but
that it is needefull the Readers should be
admonished by the waye, howe honestly
the aduersaries of our doctrine deale with
vs, while they accuse it of dissolute licen-
tiousnesse, bicause it permitteth lawfull
marriage for the amendment of so cruell
mischieues. Though they burst, whiche
cease not to adorne with forged prayles,
the constrained singlenesse of the popishe

Iohn Caluine concerninge

Cleargie: yet it is moſte certaine, that in
moſt part of them is the bottomleſſe pitte
of all vncleannelle: & I ſaye that in them
which ſeeme to be chaſte, is neuertheleſſe
an vnpure puddle. With ſuch partly vx-
rue flames of luſtes, & ſpecially manifeſt
abhomination, doth God (as ye may per-
ceiue) reuenge that Diueliſhe audacitie,
for that deſpiſinge & benefite of marriage,
like Giauntes they buylde Babiloniſhe
towres, wherewith to vanquiſh God and
nature by plaine force. And ſo it behoued
to come to paſſe, that at leaſt wiſe men
might learne, that, and none other, to be
the true chaſtite, whiche Gods rule pre-
ſcribeth vnto vs. But bycauſe we re-
ſtraine the beaſtly laſciuoſuſneſſe, wher-
of there is no meaſure in the Papiftrie,
by the bridle of wꝛdlocke: we are repor-
ted to diſanull modeſtie by ſettinge car-
nall libertie at large. And what maruell
is it: ſeing that Chriſte and Paule were
vphꝛayded with the like thinge: as if they
had broken the yoke of the lawe for the
nonce, to the entent that men might vſe
theyꝝ willes in ſtede of lawe. For they
woulde not haue purged their doctrine,
from

fro flanders so carefully, but if they had bene compolled by the lewdnesse & spightfull maliciousnesse of theyr enemies. But as many as be curable, I trust they wilbe pacified with this thoste extale, that they forge not a stumblyng blocke to themselves, of so light and triuolous a matter.

This also hath some colour: that our doctrine is disagreeable to antiquitie and the consent of all ages. And therefore the Papistes bragge theselues most therein, specially when with blowyng of trumpettes they sounde those highe names of the Fathers, and the Church. Because it is known well inough, how odious and suspected a thyng newnesse in Religion is: vnder the same pretence they say the vnskilfull from our doctrine. And I confesse sorely, that if any newe thinge be brought, it is not to be heard. But of this crime there is no better or certainer purgation, than that we will nothinge to be admitted, onlesse it be proued by clere & substantiall testimonies of the Scripture. And herein it appeareth that the Papistes are daller than Dren & Alles, whiche at least wille knowe theyr fall: who ha-

usinge forged to themselues a newcome
God, haue so forgottē the true and euer-
lastyng God, that they haue no sight at
all in the antiquitie of the heauenly Ora-
cles. Notwithstanding, they alledge that
we pretende Scripture falsely, who en-
deuer to subuert all the consent of the an-
cient Church. It is a comon old scale flau-
der of theirs, but yet so foolish, that I
would be ashamed to bestow muche time
in confuting it: besides that, a longe vo-
lume were needefull for the matter. And
our booke dw abundantly beare witnesse,
that if the allegations of the olde men be
sought, our case is by them more furthe-
red than hindered. Albeit it be manifest
inough, that the doctrine of the auncient
Fathers, is no more agreeable with the
corruptions of Papistrie, than a sheepe is
like a Wolfe, yet notwithstanding they
piche out certeine sayings of theirs, and
sometime also wordes, as perversely as
lewdly, wherewith to decyue the rude,
and suche as are not exercised in the rea-
dyng of them. As often as we object the
testimonies of the Fathers against the:
although they see themselves ouerwhel-
med

med with the weight and number of the: yet bicause they thinke themselves to be out of all daunger of gūeshot, they carelessly despise vs, and laugh at vs. For the Sea Apostolicke is so great, that it easely swalloweth vp all the Doctors that euer were. Neyther is any thing readier with them than this exception: that they passe nothinge for any determinations of the Fathers, as long as the holy sea of Rome hath decreed otherwise. Therefore amōg them, all the whole companie of the Fathers shal not be esteemed at a heare, onlesse they list themselves: but if any thinge perchaunce hath bene spoken by any one of them vnadvisedly, it muste by and by binde vs with so great deuotion, that it is vnlawfull to dissent from it neuer so little. I saye once againe that this prodigious & confused Chaōs of the Papistrie, is so vnlike the auncient gouernement of the Church, as that there is not more difference betwene fire and water. But if we seeme to eger & full of clamour in condemninge them, the Fathers woulde be much more vehemēt, if they liued at this day. Take this too, that these good sonnes,

Pitt

which

which tosse the name of the Fathers to &
 fro like a tennisball, seme to chuse al the
 grossest errorrs for the nonce, wherunto
 onlesse we giue our assent, they crie out
 vpon vs, that we are the enemies of all
 antiquitie. Melchisedech offered bread &
 wine to Abraham as he returned fro bat-
 tell. The olde doctors thinke it a sacrifice,
 which thyng they haue transferred to the
 holy supper of Christ. It is almost a chil-
 dishe errour. And yet of theyr so famous
 wyrtinges, nothinge liketh the Papistes
 so well. Now least I should stande to log
 vpon this parte, they that haue perused
 the wyrtinges of the Fathers, and can
 iudge but meanely, shall sufficiently vn-
 derstande, that we are furnished with
 theyr authoritie to assault the Papacie.
 And though they were layde as indiffe-
 rent betwene bothe, yet will they drawe
 nearer vnto vs. Wherupon then is bail-
 ded suche a pile of Offences? But what if
 we graunt, that the pure veritie of God
 cannot by vs be auouched and restored,
 bat that that same consent of many ages
 whiche they vaunt of, would aduance it
 selfe agaynst vs, (as I cōfesse that a thou-
 sands

lande yeres since all thinge haue so decayed, that newe broodes of monstrous errors and superstitions haue crope out of the shell from time to time) yet what finde they in suche dissentinge as this, worthy to be offered at? If cōparison be made, certainly those first vnder whome the Church flourished, eyther deserue to be counted lawfull Fathers alone, or at least wise, do chalenge of right the chiefe degree of honour amonge the Fathers. But the good Baptistes (such is theyr gentle nature) do celebrare the memorie onely of that corrupted age, whiche had nowe muche declined from the auncient sinceritie. And at length all their complaints come to this point, that we disanall at this day, the custome which hath bene receiued these eight hundred or these thousand yeres. But if the old proverbe be to be beleued, whiche also hath bene commonly vsed amonge them: an euil custome is nothinge els, but the auncientnesse of errour. And we knowe that the longer of cōtinuance an euill is, the more hurtfull it is. In times past this sentence of Cyprian was counted worthy to be

reioyced at : that we ought not to looke
what other men had done or sayde before
vs, but whatsoeuer Christ hath comaun-
ded, who is the first of al, that is to be fol-
lowed. No man also will denie, but this
was well and aduisedly spoken of Augu-
stine: that Christe attributeth not to him
selfe the name of custome, but the name
of truth. Now no man dare stirre though
neuer so lightly, the stinkyng hearbe Ca-
marina of corrupt custome, whiche hath
rested a longe continuance of yeres. Yea
rather foreboken rigorousnesse in main-
teyninge chiefe absurdities is wared so
stronge, that they not onely refuse the
reprouynge of them, as comminge out of
season, but also do persecute it cruelly
with fire and sword. That same Heathen
man sayeth, that like as the custome of
right speaking is to be fetched at learned
mens handes: so the custome of well li-
uinge is to be fetched at the handes of good
and honest men. Shal the lewde and cor-
rupt custome of men, carrie vs away for-
cibly as some violent tempest without
iudgement or choyce, who haue Christe
to direct vs: To the entent I maye con-
clude

clude this place briefly, if that thinge may take place with vs, which out of all controuersie ought to be a grounded principle amonge all godly men: that the doctrine of Christe is not subiect to the prescription of pæres, this surmised stumblingblocke shall hinder no man, at least, wise from the desire to searche. And whē it shalbe fully agreed vpon, that we haue from Christe that which we byng forth, who wilbe so ouerthwart as wilfully to flēte vnto men, frō the eternall wisdom of God, and the voyce of the heauenly Maister.

It offendeth many, bicause they see almost the whole worlde to be against vs. Neither are the defenders of the euil cace negligent, or to seeke what they shoulde do, but with the same engine do stryke the rude and weake: sayinge it is against all reason, that a fewe men should be credited, and all Christendome beside welnere neglected: And to treade these vnder their fēte, they chiefly arme themselves with the holy title of the Church as with a mace. But I wold faine know, howe suche as are enstraunged from the Gospell,

Gospell, by reason of our lewnesse, maye
mainteine theyr faith against y^e Turkes:
As for our part, if we beynge but one man
condemned all the men of his age by his
faith, there is no cause why the greate
multitude of vnbeleuers should moue vs
from our places. In the meane while as-
 firme that cause of Offence to be not one-
 ly scarce probable, but also vniuste and
 shamefull, where the respectes of men are
 weyed before y^e worde of God. And why?
 shall not Gods truth stande sure, except
 it please meane to beleue it? Rather (as
 Paule sayeth) let every man remayne a
 lier, and let them acknowledge God to be
 true, vnto whome he vouchsaunt to ma-
 nifest him selfe. And we haue already in
 another place shewed, why the greater
 parte of men doth so hardly yelde them-
 selues seruiceable to God. So muche the
 lesse then is it convenient that in so great
 stubburnnesse of the worlde, we shoulde
 direct our faith after example of the mul-
 titude. But Christe giueth a token, that
 whither the Eagles resorte, there is the
 Carion. I denie not verely, but that if at
 any time all the Eagles shalbe gathered
 togi-

together into one place, then the conuer-
sion of the whole worlde is to be hoped for.
But forasmuche as Christe meaneth not
there all sortes of Egles, but suche as fol-
low the lively sence of his death: who se-
eth not, that that sayinge is to be restrei-
ned to a fewe, if any man wil perchaunce
take exceptions that we are not excused
by the example of Noe, if we withdraue
our selues from that congregatio whiche
holdeth the name of the Church: when
Esay commaunded to leaue the con-
spiracie of men and follow God onely, he
meaned not straungers, but euen such as
at that time moste glozied in the name of
Gods people. And Peter when he maketh
the Church like the Arke, because when
the worlde perisheth, a little handfull of
men is saued as it were by a floud: giueth
sufficient warnyng, that we ought not to
hange vpon the multitude. Why then
haue miserable men pleasure, to seeke oc-
casion of waueyng and staggering, a-
monge the variable blastes of the worlde,
when God stayeth vs vppon the euerla-
sting fundatton of his worde: why had
they rather waue amonge the stormes of
opinions,

John Caluine concerninge

opinions, than harbzough at ease in the
sure haue of certelne veritie, to whiche
God calleth vs. But very great reuerence
is dewe to the Church. I confesse so true-
ly: and I willingly also put this more to
it, that the vnderstanding of the Church
is so linked with the native doctrine of
the lawe and the Gospell, that it is wor-
thely called the faithful keeper and inter-
preter of the same. But betwene vs and
the Papistes is this oddes: that they
thinke the Church not to be the pillar of
truthe, other wise than in sittynge as a
iudge ouer the worde of God. And we
on the cōtrarie parte bphold, that bicause
the Church submitteth it selfe reuerētly
vnto the worde of God, the truth is by it
reteyned, and deliuered vnto others frō
hande to hande. And therfore the worde
of God hath no more authoritie amonge
them, than the Church as it were by in-
treatance graunteth vnto it: & they turne
the interpretatiō of the whole Scripture
to the iudgement of the Church, euen
after the same maner that the Lesbians in
old time were wont to make their mason
worke by theyr leaden rule, as the olde
Proverbe

Proverbe reporteth. There is therefore no place of the Scripture so clære, whiche beyng bowed (or to speake more properly) wrighted to this Lesbian rule, taketh not a straunge shape. And yet the chiefe cõtention betwene vs consisteth not vpon this point alone. But after the Papistes haue installed the Church in Christs throne, to determine Religio at her owne pleasure, and to iudge of the Scripture without appealnge from her, by and by thei take the lawe (such as it is) into thei owne handes. While on the other side, because it is as easie a matter, as dangerous to be deceiued in, will haue it discussed whiche is the true Church. Surely it is no newe thinge, that those are sometime cruell Molues, which occupie the romes of sheapeherdes: and that thei are wicked & ranke traytours to God & his Church, in whose hãde the ordinarie Souereintie is. What cause then is there why vaine hobgoblins shoulde make vs so afraide, that we shoulde not (as becommeth) trie whether the same that beareth the name of the Church, be the true Church or no? Paule affirmeth the Church to be the
pillar

pillar of truthe : but yet the same Paule
forgetteth both the fallynge away of the
worlde nowe conuerted , and that Anti-
christ should reigne in the middes of Gods
Temple. It is knowen well inough that
he sustained the like encounters as we are
exercised with at this daye , when the
Iewes takinge pryde in the name of the
Churche, cried out vpon him that he was
a forsaker of his order , and an Autho^r of
Scismes and troubles. They report the-
selues to be descended from the very Apo-
stles by continuall succession : verely af-
ter the same maner that Caligula & Nero
succeeded , Valerius Publicola, and Lucius
Brutus. For they cling vnto the Apo-
stles, as if there were not an vnumera-
ble Chaos put by them , whiche mighte
breake all aliances betwixt them, if there
were any. Because the dunghil of the po-
pish Clergie is against vs , they wil haue
vs no lesse pressed with y^e pernerse dome,
than if the Angels condemned vs out of
Heauen. Verely with the same pryde, did
the Scribes in olde time relect Christ, be-
cause none of the Princes or Pharisees
had beleued in him. And forasmuche as
they

they are determined to stande to theyr
 tacklynge with toth and nayle, euen to
 the vtterance, for maintenance of theyr
 tyzannle, & yet are destitute of true rea-
 sons: it is no maruell though they rappe
 out vaine soundes. But I woulde desire
 all them, vnto whome the false vsurped
 name of the Church is an occasion of Of-
 fence, that they would ones finde in their
 hartes to open theyr eares and their eyes,
 least the deceitfull image of a body, pull
 them from their head: & a harlot disguised
 in the apparell of a hynde, carie them from
 theyr spouse Chyste. For what markes I
 beseeche you haue they, whereby they may
 know the Church of Chyste, in all the
 whole bande of the Romish Antichrist?
 Unless peraduenture whyle they see the
 Pope in his Awe, with h crossse thzowent
 at his fete, the Cardinales in scarlet: the
 Bishops glitteryng with myters & croy-
 sers: and the reste of the inferiour rable
 euery one with their severall cognisances,
 beinge contented with these tokens they
 desire none other Church, than suche a
 one as appeareth in disguisings like
 maskers and players of enterludes. For
 what

John Caluine concerninge

what els is there to be sayd to these trife-
lyng fellowes, when hauinge so often, so
pitthely, and plentuously, bene by vs cō-
futed, they persist still neuerthelesse in
takinge vpon the the title of the Church?

I sayd at the beginnyng that none al-
most were here deceiued, but suche as be-
yng lothe to come to Chryste, do procure
lettres to themselues from a farre of. The
time hath bene that this same scruple
hath hindzed many simple & godly soules:
but at this day (I say) there are fewe that
object the Offence, risinge vpon the name
of the Church, againste the wholesome
doctrine, except it be suche as maliciously
and proudly baunt themselues against
Chryste. Like lewdnesse is it, that thei de-
maunde miracles at our hande, wherwith
they beyng amazed, are at length compel-
led to yelde vnto God speakyng by vs.
And I saye, that seyng our doctrine bea-
reth euident witnesse to it selfe, that it
hath bene confirmed by all the miracles
Logiche haue bene since the worlde was
made: these men whiche forgettyng the
olde miracles gape after new, for as much
as they are so astonied at the manifest
power

power of God , and so blinde in the clære
light , are no lesse monsters themselues,
than if we should see a man turned into a
beast . Bicause diuers are enriched with
holy goods , and othersome haue méetely
well appeased theyr hungar for a time,
the enemies of the Gospell repozte, that
we were ledde to alter thinges for desire
of spoyle, than for any good zeale to God:
warde: and many which haloke for a pre-
sence to put by the Gospell, giue theyr as-
sent to these malicious sayinges. Surely
for my parte , if there be any that haue
spoyled the goodes of the Church , to fill
theyr owne pouches , I excuse them not.
And my Bookes are manifest witnessses,
how much I abhorre frō such sacriledges.
But as I am not minded to make my self
a patrone or aduocate of the defaultes of
our parte, if any be: so the slander is not
to be bozne with, that the malicious per-
sones charge vs withall , howe we made
our pray of all whatsoeuer was taken frō
those filthie Seagulles, that is to say, the
chapleynes of Ball and the Pokes . Cer-
teinly whereas the popishe impietie is a-
bolished , there at leastwise parte of the

John Caluine concerninge

reuenewes, whiche whores and baudes deuoured with the Priestes, is now bestowed vpon the poore. Somewhat more is bestowed vpon scholes thā was wonte to be: true Pastours are founde, that minister the doctrine of Salvation to the people: expences are allowed to mainteine the state of the Church, and those not small. Although this defence doe not acquite vs before God, (whiche thinge I confesse with a good will:) yet it declareth that Offence is maliciously gathered thereupō, against the doctrine of the Gospel. But they shewe howe it is manifest, for what purpose we haue bene moued to take this cause in hande, in asmuch as almost all beyng occupied about looking to theyr priuate affayres, are slouthfull in exactyng discipline, in correctyng vices, and in increasyng and mainteynyng the kingdome of Christe. Wherefore then doe not they rather warine vs with theyr heate, than they fryse vnto our coldnesse? Let the cōplaintes of Aggeus touchyng the neglectyng of the Temple be read. There a man maye beholde as it were painted in a table, the slouthfulnesse of
our

our age, was not therfore the building of the temple againe a very holy worke of God, bicause at that time euery man beyng busied aboute his owne house, cared not for the Temple of God: Dught any man therfore to shrinke, bicause he sawe some not onely cease from so needefull a duetie, but also wickedly defraude God of his first fruites and tenthes: But this is surely the thing that I spake of before, anone after the beginnyng: that many beyng entagled with the vnholly friendships of the worlde, doe couet any Offences that may be against Christe, rather than to offende the wicked enemies of the healthful doctrine. This lewde ambition ministreth vnto them bothe wit to forge Offences, and eloquence to barke at the Gospell with currissh malicioussnes. Besides that, beyng not content with snatchyng at the present evils, they seeke with like malicioussnesse for somewhat to gnaue vpon hereafter. For they surmise that they foresee at hande the desolation of the Church, whiche hangeth ouer it by meanes of inwarde dissention. These forecastyng men, wonder that we be no

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more

more moued hereat : and to the entent to
bzinge vs in hatred, they gather that we
are altogither carelesse, or that we would
not passe though the earth were sette on
fyre. So I remember, the bishop of Aquis-
leia did ones reason with me in commu-
nication betwene vs two alone, how hor-
rible a destruction was to be feared, if we
did not shortly bzinge our discordes to an
ende. And all his whole talke tended to
this ende, that it could not otherwise be,
but that one time or other y matter must
come to triall by the sword, if we were
so stify bente to maintaine our quarrell.
Of the whiche warre, this woulde be the
issuc, that learnynge should be extinguis-
shed, barbarous confusion brought in, &
humanitie it selfe in maner be taken out
of the worlde, and as the faulte of these
euillies sticked in vs, so were we like to
abide al the blame. Yea (y he) and it must
needes come to passe, that this religio, in
defence whereof ye stāde so stoutly, must
perishe togither with learninge. What
whiche I answered at that time to him
alone, let them take it as spoken to them
all. We surely, are neither so dulwitted
but

but that we can call to minde whatsoeuer
 Sathan practise, nor yet so sauage and
 beastly to neglect it without regarde. As
 for peace & quietnesse, we not onely wish
 the continuance of them, but also (as much
 as in vs lieth) seeke to mainteyne them.
 Of good order and ciuill pollicie, we are
 as desirous as he that is most. How care-
 full we are for the maintenance of lear-
 nyng, it needeth not to preache it in
 wordes. But sayng that Christ commaun-
 ded his Gospell to be preached without al
 exception: what sequele so euer ensewe
 thereon, we ought to obey this commaunde-
 ment. Al gates men take to much vppon
 them, if they hope for better successe by
 theyr owne deuises, than by the meane
 that God hath appointed. Why not? I
 imagine they God to be blinde and vnad-
 uised, to cast his Church in danger with-
 out consideration. Nay rather saynge he
 is the best orderer of things of all others,
 it is our duetie to ouercome al anguishes,
 be they neuer so troublesome, with this
 one sayinge of Abraham: the Lorde shall
 prouide: shall we thinke you be careful of
 this societie betwene man and man, and

Ditt

shall

shall God the worker thereof haue no minde at all of it: shall the Church beyng miserably forsake of her onely soueraine and mainteiner of her welfare, leane vnto our prouidence? But we are worthis to be helde excused, if executinge obediently the office that God hath enioyned vs, we let God alone with his parte. And sayng Dauid declareth it to be his peculiar worke, to asswage y trouble some warres of the Sea, to pacifie warres, & to breake the chariotes and the speares: this assurance ought to be inough to encourage vs in the auouchyng of that doctrine, whiche onely procureth vs his grace & blessinge. Notwithstanding, what issue so euer our attemptes in the ende haue, there shall neuer be any cause why it shoulde repent vs to haue perfozmed, both godly and acceptable obedience vnto God: and (which may comforte our heauinesse euen in our greatest afflictions,) to haue saythfully furthered bothe y glorie of Christ, (which is moze to be esteemed than all the kingdoms of the worlde,) and also our owne soules health, (whiche is moze precious than all the worlde.)

Now that I haue reckened by the Offences in generall, which we finde by experience to be hurtfull, all the children of God are briefly to be admonished againe, that beyng armed with the remedies by me shewed, they rather keepe Christe still for theyr foundation, than by their rashe and lewde runnyng vpon him, make him to themselves a stone to stumble at, and a rocke to dash against. It cannot otherwise be but that in this worlde, many occasions of Offence must from time to time be fathered vpon the faithfull. From the which not euē Christe him selfe was free. Yea rather it is scarcely to be hoped for, that they should stepe one pace, but that the Deuill cast some stumblingblocke in their wates. So must they walke through innumerable Offences. But albeit the varietie of them be manifolde, and the heape thicke packed, yet shall none be a Christian, but he that wadeth through them with victorie. Christ sayth, that Peter him selfe was a stumblingblocke vnto him, when he assayed to call him backe from sufferynge death. But did he retyre backe when he was assaulted with occa-

sion of Offence: Nay rather perceyvinge
Sathan in Peter, he badde him auaint.
To the entent we should know that we
must abide the same encounter as wel as
he, he telleth vs all in generall, it cannot
otherwise be but Offences muste come.
But euen as he assureth those whiche are
his, that they shall neuer be free from Of-
fences: so excuseth he no cause of Offence.
For when he biddeth the right eye should
be put out, if it offende any man, he ad-
monisheth vs that there is nothyng of so
great valour, that in respect thereof we
ought any whit to be led fro the marke.
If we were so diligent in auoydinge Of-
fences, that none of vs woulde spare his
owne eyes, I shoulde not haue needed to
spende so much labour in puttynge away
Offences. I graunt it is a sore encounter
and aboue our strength, but Chyriste saith
not in vaine, that he hath warned his dis-
ciples they should not be Offended. For
there is none other cause why we are vn-
able to vanquishe and put to flight Of-
fences, sauynge that we harken not to
Chyriste, whē he speaketh to vs. Surely it
is true that he speaketh in another place,
how

how they that stumble doe stumble in the night. For wherefoze serueth the light of the Gospell, but to set befoze our eyes the stumblinge blockes in the waye vs the waye. But some man will say, that a let although it be seene, yet will it not cease to hinder our race. But I haue shewed already, that if our owne nicenesse let vs not, Christe alone is sufficient to ouercome all Offences, seinge that by his heauenly power he listeth vs vp aboue the worlde. And if we ought so valiantly to resist the Offence, whiche inuadeth vs against our willes, and flying from it, they shall haue the lesse to lay for themselues, who thorough a certaine lewd dispositiō, are of themselues enclined to Offences. Paule putteth vs in remembrance, that the same thinge happened to the Iewes, who albeit they in no wise sought Offence of a set purpose, yet bicause in goynge about to stablish their owne rightuousnesse, they were not subiect to the rightuousnesse of God, they stumbled at Christe: yea and with a deadly shipwrecke dashed againste him, as it had bene againste a rocke. But the peruersenesse, or pēuissness

nesse of suche as willingly take holde of
Offences offered, or els desirously drawe
vnto them those that are a farre of, is in
no wise tolerable. And why so? Seynge
that Paule testifieth howe he forgetteth
his former life, to the entet he may make
speede to attaine the higher vocation that
is aboue, exhorting vs by his owne exam-
ple to make the like haste: Shall any man
gather Offences a farre of, to hinder his
owne race without punishment? Now if
God haue punished a preposterous zeale
so sore in the Jewes, what thinke we shal
be done to these that stumble wittingly &
willingly, or rather which damme by the
way, otherwise plaine of it self, with stu-
blingblockes heaped together on al sides:
but specially what pardon leaue they for
theselues, who make theselues bucklars
of the vices & wickednesses of me. to beate
backe God withall: For if euen the faith-
full themselues be forbidden to looke one
at another, least any thing should hinder
theyr course: how should Christ pardon vs,
if we stāde gazing farre about vs, seeking
of set purpose the thinge y maye stay vs?
Such we may truely & aptly cōpare vnto
swine,

swine, vnto whome by reason of the nature lone they haue to stinche, nothyng is moze swete thā to wallow themselves in myze and durte. The cruell vengeance of God shall light vpon all swine that are so greedy of Offences, whither they hunte for them, or whither they delight in that they are offered vnto them, so y they dayly offences heaped one in anothers necke, doo drowne them in everlastyng destruction. For it is good iustice that they which are wilfully blinde, shoulde be made so blinde in good earnest, y at length the disease be past al helpe. Let vs in the meane season, when we heare Chyriste cursing al those that giue occasion of Offence to the weake, loke aduisedly to our selues, y no Offence at al happen thzough our faulte. Neuerthelesse, seyng it behoueth that Chyriste be a stone for the reprobates, and for the faithlesse world to stūble at, onely let vs be blamelesse or faultlesse, to take vp the Offences vnfearefully as often as Sathan thrusteth them vpo vs, or els let vs be armed with y onely title of Chyrist. And therewithall let another sentence of Chyrist come to our minde. For when his


Discl

Iohn Caluine concerninge Offences.

Disciples objected that y^e Phariseis were offended, he bade them not passe of them, bicause they were blinde themselues, and the guides of the blinde. He addeth also a notable saying: Euery plantyng that my Father hath not planted shalbe pulled vp by the roote. Surely we muste deale in such sort, as we may seeke the soule health of all men so neare as we can: but for as much as it is not giuen vs of God, to saue them whome he hath condemned to destruction, let that perish whiche must perish, as is in the Prophet Zacharie. For if it had liked Paule to take awaye the Defence of the Crosse, it had bene an easie matter for him, to haue coined some awke and ouerthward reasons for the purpose. But he so much abhorreth from this deuice, that he counteth it a great absurditie to haue it taken awaye. We may perceiue he kept well in minde that which he saith in another place, that although vnto the reprobates we be a sauour of death vnto death, yet neuerthelesse we caste a sweete sauour vnto God. Finis.

Praise be to God.

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